SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 1223 02507 5681

BOOK NO.
759.2 ZD55

ACCESSION
208188

FORM 3431 30M 8-45

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Careful usage of books is expected, and any injury or loss is to be paid for by the borrower. A charge of two cents will be made for each day, or fraction thereof, that this book is kept overtime.

SEE DATE WHEN DUE BELOW

This book may be renewed if not requested by other borrowers.

Dec 20'47
NOV 19 1994
DEC 6 - 1994

Damage Noted
by SNP date 6/16

Report change of address promptly

F 3439—175M—8-46

CALLER HERRIN'

by Alexander Roche, R.S.A.

OUR FAVOURITE PAINTERS

BY STEWART DICK

AUTHOR OF "ARTS & CRAFTS OF OLD JAPAN"
"MASTER PAINTERS," &c.

ST PUBLIC LIBRARY

T. N. FOULIS, Limited
EDINBURGH & LONDON

This work is published by
T. N. FOULIS, Ltd.
EDINBURGH: 15 Frederick Street
LONDON: 91 Great Russell Street, W.C.
BOSTON, U.S.A.: 124 Chestnut Street
(*Le Roy Phillips, Agent*)
And may also be ordered through the following agencies
where the work may be examined
AUSTRALASIA: The Oxford University Press, Cathedral Buildings
205 Flinders Lane, Melbourne
CANADA: W. C. Bell, 25 Richmond Street West, Toronto
DENMARK: Aaboulevard 28, Copenhagen
(*Norrebros Boghandel*)

Published in October
Nineteen hundred and
twenty-three

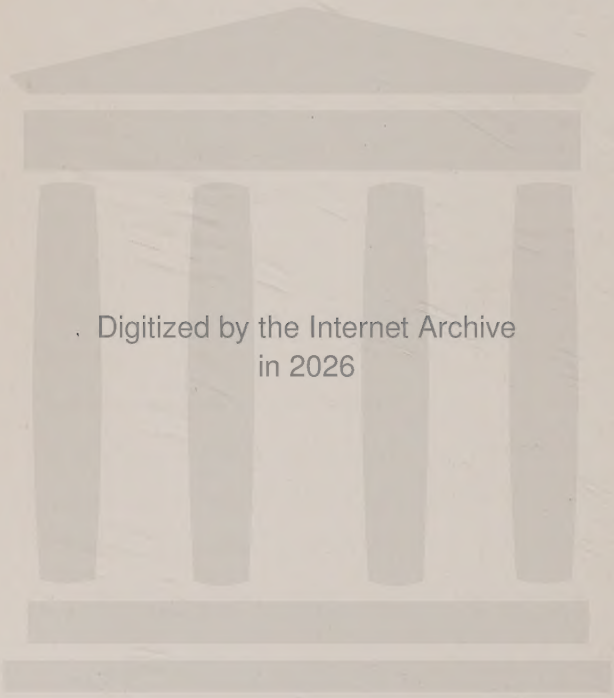
759.2
Z355
208188

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
THE EDINBURGH PRESS, 9 AND 11 YOUNG STREET, EDINBURGH

3 1223 02507 5681

CONTENTS

	FOREWORD	*page* 11
I.	THE COMING OF POPULAR ART IN ENGLAND	15
II.	FORD MADOX BROWN	43
III.	SIR JOHN EVERETT MILLAIS	75
IV.	WILLIAM HOLMAN HUNT	107
V.	DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI	143
VI.	SIR EDWARD BURNE-JONES	181
VII.	ALFRED STEVENS	201
VIII.	GEORGE FREDERICK WATTS	229
IX.	FREDERIC, LORD LEIGHTON	255
X.	JAMES M'NEILL WHISTLER	279
	A FEW SCOTTISH PAINTERS	311



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/ourfavouritepain0000stew

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CALLER HERRIN'
Alexander Roche, R.S.A. . . . . . *Frontispiece*

CHRIST WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET
Madox Brown . National Gallery, London *page* 48

THE LAST OF ENGLAND
Madox Brown . Tate Gallery, London . *page* 56

CHRIST IN CARPENTER'S SHOP
Millais . . . . Tate Gallery, London . *page* 80

LIGHT OF THE WORLD
Holman Hunt . St Paul's Cathedral, London *page* 120

TRIUMPH OF THE INNOCENTS
Holman Hunt . National Gallery, London *page* 136

ANNUNCIATION
Rossetti . . . National Gallery, London *page* 152

BEATA BEATRIX
Rossetti . . . Tate Gallery, London . *page* 168

DANTE'S DREAM
Rossetti . . . Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool . . . . . *page* 176

GOLDEN STAIRS
Sir E. Burne-Jones . . . . . *page* 184

MIRROR OF VENUS
Sir E. Burne-Jones . . . . . *page* 192

FIGURES FROM FIREPLACE
Stevens . . . . Tate Gallery, London . . *page* 208

MRS COLEMAN
Stevens . . . . National Gallery, London *page* 224

LOVE AND LIFE
G. F. Watts . . Tate Gallery, London . . *page* 232

LOVE TRIUMPHANT
G. F. Watts . . Tate Gallery, London . . *page* 240

HOPE
G. F. Watts . . Tate Gallery, London . . *page* 248

ATHLETE
Lord Leighton . Tate Gallery, London . . *page* 264

BATH OF PSYCHE
Lord Leighton . Tate Gallery, London . . *page* 272

BATTERSEA BRIDGE
Whistler . . . Tate Gallery, London . . *page* 280

LITTLE WHITE GIRL
Whistler . . . National Gallery, London *page* 296

FOREWORD

THIS LITTLE VOLUME DOES NOT PRETEND to break any new ground or to add any fresh information to what is already known of the Pre-Raphaelite and other Victorian painters.

Full details of the history of the Pre-Raphaelite movement are to be found in the works of several of the members themselves, and of their personal associates. To the two large volumes by Holman Hunt—*Pre-Raphaelism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*—the numerous writings of W. M. Rossetti, the *Life of Sir John Everett Millais* by his son John Guille Millais, the *Life of Ford Madox Brown* by his grandson, Ford Madox Hueffer, the author is largely indebted, and to these works the reader who wishes to carry the study of the subject further is referred.

The object of the present volume is to interest a class not intimately acquainted with art or art history, particularly the young people who have just left school, to put before them, without the technical language of art critics or the jargon of the studio, a compact account of an extremely interesting phase of art development in our own country, and if possible to lead them on to further and more advanced art studies.

CHAPTER ONE

THE COMING OF POPULAR ART IN ENGLAND

CHAPTER ONE COMING OF POPULAR ART IN ENGLAND

ALTHOUGH THE ENGLISH SCHOOL OF Painting springs into independent existence in the beginning of the eighteenth century, and produces during that period a series of brilliant artists, yet it is not till a later stage that it really enters into the life of the English people.

Hogarth had his vogue, but more as a social satirist than as a painter. It was the lash that he wielded so shrewdly that gave him his audience, and he was known almost entirely from the engravings after his work, not from the original paintings. It is only to-day that we have learned to go to the Tate Gallery to rejoice in the brilliant qualities of the "Mariage à la Mode" series as paintings.

The great portraitists of the eighteenth century, Reynolds, Gainsborough and Romney, and their successors in the beginning of the nineteenth century, in spite of the brilliance of their works were, after all, the fashionable painters of the nobility and the rich, who alone could afford to purchase their work. They

worked for an exclusive clientele and made little appeal to the general public. And, except in a few cases, their work, full of dignity, of refinement, of charm, rather lacks the intimate touch which brings it into close relation with daily life. It is essentially a patrician art.

A more familiar note is struck in the landscape school at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and here, as in Hogarth's case, by means of engravings the influence is made more widespread—Turner's large fortune was obtained almost entirely from the sale of engravings of his work—but it is not until the middle of the century that the popular note is struck and art really enters into ordinary daily life.

From our vantage point of half a century later, we are apt to look with somewhat indulgent contempt on many phases of Victorian culture and art.

But the Victorian era undoubtedly will rank in history as one of the great periods in our national development. It marks the change from an older civilisation to a newer, and with

it comes a great quickening of the pulse of national life.

The country had recovered from the drain of the Napoleonic wars and was once more prosperous. New movements, portentous in their significance, had arisen. Modern industrialism—the factory system with its good and its evil, its massed production, its great increase of wealth and employment, and alas! its destruction of the fresh countryside, its creation of crowded cities with their slum areas—was displacing the simpler and more primitive forms of industry. We were becoming more and more a manufacturing and less an agricultural country. Population was increasing rapidly, but our growing colonies formed an outlet and attracted especially the more adventurous spirits.

The old patrician civilisation was passing; a large and important middle class, cultured and intelligent, though not so much on classic lines as the old school, was coming into existence.

It is a great age of English Literature. Sir Walter Scott, a generation before, had led the

way, in his Waverley Novels, to a familiar and intimate treatment of popular life and character. The Victorian era is the age of Dickens and Thackeray. Tennyson, too, in his Arthurian cycle of poems turns from the classic themes of his predecessors to the early legends of our own race.

In art, too, we find that the artist steps down into the arena and deals with the affairs of daily life. It is the great virtue of Victorian art that, despite obvious faults, it is marked by an intimacy of treatment, an adoption of the familiar outlook, a selection of the familiar theme. It is not a high-brow superior art, it is an art of the people for the people, unpretentious but sincere. And so in the Victorian period the names of a few painters, as well as the names of a few writers and the names of a few preachers, become household words. The artist becomes again what he was in the days of the Italian Renaissance, a figure in the full stream of civic life.

In the popularisation of art one element should not be overlooked—the beautiful wood-cut illustrations of the fifties, sixties and seven-

ties, Moxon's illustrated editions of Tennyson, and such periodicals as *Good Words*, *Cornhill* and others, which carried right into the homes of the people so much of the finest art of the day.

To-day the art public is more fastidious, the artist more self-conscious. We often smile at the sentimentality of the Victorians; we don't mind so much as they did if, in the search for truth, we upset the conventionalities of life; we are not so willing as they were to accept a decent compromise.

But when all is said and done, if we cast our eye over a list of our favourite painters, we shall still find there the names of many of the old friends of Victorian days.

Towards the middle of the nineteenth century art in England was in a comatose state. The great phase of portraiture was past and gone; the second great phase—that of landscape—was coming to an end. In 1822 Constable looking round him had said: "The art will go out; there will be no genuine painting in England in thirty years."

Amidst the gloom of bituminous back-

grounds loomed forth the classic figures of the "grand style," magnificently and portentously dull.

What the new public wanted was something they could understand. Not the work of the schoolmen built up on theories, but something with freshness and spontaneity, in touch with natural life, in touch with natural beauty as visible to their own eyes.

It is the great glory of the Pre-Raphaelites that they catered for this public taste, played down to the public level of comprehension, and yet by a wonderful combination of poetical inspiration, intellectual power, and brilliant craftsmanship, produced in the new style some of the outstanding masterpieces of British Art.

In the year 1848 three young students were working together at the Royal Academy Schools — John Everett Millais, aged 19; Dante Gabriel Rossetti, aged 20; and William Holman Hunt, aged 21. Young, eager, full of enthusiasm, they felt themselves entirely out of sympathy with the academic art of the day and were drawn together by a certain similar-

ity of outlook. In character, the three were widely different—yet together they formed an exceedingly strong combination, each supplying something the others lacked. Millais was the brilliant craftsman, medallist of the Academy, tall, handsome, vivacious, brimming over with life and animal spirits. Rossetti (the son of an Italian political refugee, a man of culture and the author of a commentary on Dante) was already a poet as well as a painter, had a wonderful intensity of enthusiasm and the magnetic personality which enabled him to pass it on to his fellows. Holman Hunt, the third, was a young man of more ordinary build but with great determination and tenacity of purpose. Rossetti supplied the poetic inspiration, Millais the brilliant craftsmanship, Hunt the driving power, and working together they formed something more than the mere sum of their qualities. We find a parallel in the physical world ; two or three substances passive enough when separate, undergo an extraordinary change when placed in contact. Passivity turns to violent activity ; a chemical action is set up, resulting in start-

ling changes; there is the shock of an explosion, and a new compound is formed.

Another older man, Ford Madox Brown, closely associated with the group, may here be mentioned, as his example to some extent pointed out the path followed by the younger men. Brown, who was about ten years their senior, had studied on the Continent and recently returning to England had entered for the competition at Westminster Hall in connection with the decoration of the New Houses of Parliament. His work had several striking characteristics differentiating it from the current art of the day. He discarded the heavy bituminous background, painted in fresh bright colours on a white ground and with a minute attention to detail.

Many were the meetings of the three young enthusiasts and heated the discussions as to how they were to make a fresh start, if English Art was once again to be placed on its feet.

One evening at the house of Millais' father they were looking over a portfolio of Lasinio's engravings of the fourteenth-century frescoes in the Campo Santo, at Pisa, and were struck

by the simplicity and directness of the old work, unencumbered by the scholastic pedantry of the later followers of Raphael, who formed the gods of the academic school.

There and then the project was mooted of forming themselves into a little society. "Rossetti talked them into it," says Ford Madox Brown, and we can quite believe that his infectious enthusiasm swept everything before it. Four others were invited to join with them: Thomas Woolner, a sculptor; James Collinson, a painter of very mediocre quality; F. G. Stephens, more a critic than a painter; and William Michael Rossetti, also a writer; and these seven formed the original Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The name chosen signified their adherence to the principles of sincerity and directness, which in their opinion characterised the fourteenth-century masters, and when their works appeared they bore the mystic initials P.R.B., the significance of which the members were pledged to keep a profound secret. The principles on which the Brotherhood intended to work were afterwards formulated in more detail.

The first and most important article in their creed was the demand for sincerity on the part of the artist. That he should paint what he thought and felt; not what somebody else had thought or felt. Here, of course, they were on sure ground, and one might say that this principle has been at the root of all genuine art.

The second was of a more technical nature and dealt with the method of handling. Every object was to be painted direct from Nature, fully and completely, and in as searching a manner as possible.

Here, of course, we are on more doubtful ground. This, of course, is the technique of the Van Eycks, and of Holbein, and great pictures have been painted in this way. It is not the technique of the later Italians, or of the great seventeenth-century masters—Rubens, Rembrandt, Van Dyck, Velazquez—especially in their later and most mature periods. Indeed, one might say that, generally speaking, the later developments of painting have been on the lines of a broader handling, where minute details are more or less lost, and many of

the world's masterpieces are painted in the broader style.

In fact the method advocated by the Pre-Raphaelites was a reversion to a more primitive style of painting, and carried with it certain disadvantages, as regards the representation of atmosphere, truth of tone, and other qualities.

But two things must be noted: First, that if one does wish to paint in this minutely detailed and searching fashion, there is only one way in which it can be done: the artist must make himself a thoroughly competent craftsman. So in that way the rule was all to the good. The second point to be noted is of special interest. It was here that the Pre-Raphaelites found a new point of contact with the public. The appreciation of the old academic style required the study of the principles of Italian art. The connoisseur of the old style was an erudite person, whose knowledge and taste had been acquired as the result of careful study. But the buyer of a Pre-Raphaelite picture needed none of this erudition. The fresh bright colour attracted him in the same way as a butterfly or a flower attracts a child, and

though he knew nothing of the laws of artistic composition, yet his eye told him that the forms of actual life were imitated with extraordinary fidelity.

And so in a sense the Pre-Raphaelite treatment was a sop to the public, and in so far as it tended to set up a false standard of values, by making the mechanical part of painting—mere imitation of the appearances of Nature—the test of a picture, it was a source of weakness to the movement.

But the finest works of the school add much more than mere imitation of natural facts. Millais' early works are marked by dignity of feeling, fine design, rich and glowing colour, yet kept in perfect harmony, and by an extraordinary power of using minute detail, and yet keeping the unimportant in due subordination to the main parts of his picture. The same might be said for some of the finest works produced by Holman Hunt in the early days, though his brilliant colour sometimes tended to be garish, and he was not always successful in preventing unimportant details asserting themselves too strongly.

The real measure of these works, as of all great works of art, is the vision in the mind of the artist and the completeness with which he can realise it on his canvas.

It is when we come to the work of the lesser men, of the imitators who, lacking genuine inspiration, merely follow the method, giving us the form without the spirit, that the Pre-Raphaelite method is shown to be in itself no better than any other. Nothing could be duller and more wearisome than the painful cataloguing of natural fact, and that alone, which fills so many of the canvases of the later followers.

Another still more questionable tenet of the Pre-Raphaelites was that "every picture must enshrine some worthy idea."

Now it is undoubted that the greatest and most impressive pictures of all are those which express some great idea: it is, for instance, the combination of lofty subject and worthy treatment which makes Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper" one of the greatest monuments of Christian art. But we must remember two things: First, that sincerity and directness

will dignify any subject; that in art as in life nothing is common or unclean, if looked at rightly and portrayed sympathetically; and second, that no loftiness of idea will excuse bad craftsmanship, and that an excellent moral may be tacked on to a very bad picture.

So here we are evidently on dangerous ground, and in too many paintings in the Pre-Raphaelite style the literary element overpowers the artistic. As Mr Ford Madox Hueffer neatly puts it, in too many cases "the principal person in the picture is the incident pointing the moral."

But here is a second sop to the public more tempting than the first. We cannot all be artistic, but we can all be moral, and it makes us feel very superior to be moral. And the moralist can choose his pictures for the message they convey, apart altogether from their artistic excellence. "I go," he says, "to the root of the matter and search for the elevated thought. I am not concerned with the more trivial and surface qualities of the work."

And so we have the abuse of the Pre-Raphaelite style, the production by inferior

artists of elaborate moral lectures in pictorial form, carried out with a painstaking wealth of redundant detail, but with a painful lack of real pictorial vision.

We have then this little band starting their Society in the winter of 1848, all very young, full of enthusiasm, and with very definite ideas as to what they despised in the work of the day. They hated shams, they wanted sincerity. They were tired of the endless repetition of set forms, the following out of old methods; they wanted to experiment for themselves. Above all they hated the tricks of execution, the flourishes that merely gave a surface gloss to the work—all these things to them were "slosh." Searching observation, exact and careful representation were what they demanded, and added to that—instead of gloom and murkiness—clear and brilliant colour.

In addition to the actual members and to Madox Brown were one or two others closely in sympathy. Walter Deverell was the chief of these: a fellow-student at the Royal Academy, handsome and versatile, a clever

actor, and a poet as well, he was a universal favourite.

He was the means of introducing another even more interesting figure, whose name will always be linked with the P.R.B. Going shopping one day with his mother, and lounging about in a milliner's shop while she made her purchases, he peered through a glass door into an inner workroom, and saw there sewing among the work girls "a stupendously beautiful creature." It was Miss Siddall. Fired at once he asked her to sit for the picture from "Twelfth Night" on which he was engaged, and she consented.

A day or so after, full of his discovery, he burst into Holman Hunt's studio as Rossetti and he are working. They must come and see her. He has been trying all to-day to paint her. To-morrow she is coming again. They must come and see her. Hunt is too busy, but Rossetti goes, and she enters definitely into his life. About a year after they are engaged, and after a long engagement married.

She sits for all the group.

Hunt paints her as "Sylvia" in the "Two Gentlemen of Verona," Millais as "Ophelia." Rossetti never tires of drawing and painting her. Unfortunately her rich auburn hair and clear brilliant complexion go with a consumptive tendency, and her health becomes more and more precarious as time goes on.

The first works of the members appeared in 1849, Millais' "Lorenzo and Isabella," shown at the Royal Academy, and Hunt's "Rienzi," and Rossetti's "Girlhood of Mary Virgin," shown at the Free Exhibition at Hyde Park Corner. They excited a good deal of comment but no violent opposition.

In the following year the revolutionists made a fresh attack on the established order of things by the issue of their journal *The Germ:* "Thoughts towards Nature in Poetry, Literature, and Art." The little publication only ran to four numbers, and beyond the fact that several early poems of Rossetti and his sister Christina appeared there, has little literary interest, but it hoisted undoubtedly the banner of revolt. The secret of the significance of the mystic letters, too, had leaked

out, as it was bound to, and when the little band sent their pictures to the Exhibitions of 1850 the storm broke upon their heads.

Millais' contributions were "Christ in the House of His Parents" and "Ferdinand and Ariel"; Holman Hunt's "A Missionary Escaping from the Druids," these being sent to the Academy. Rossetti's only picture was the beautiful "Ecce Ancilla Domini," exhibited at the Free Exhibition. All came in for condemnation, but Millais' "Christ in the House of His Parents" most of all. The critic of the *Athenæum*, who had dealt with them not unkindly the year before, led the attack:

"Mr Millais in his picture without a name (518), which represents a Holy Family in the interior of a carpenter's shop, has been most successful in giving the least dignified features of his presentment, and in giving to the higher forms, characters and meanings a circumstantial Art Language from which we recoil with loathing and disgust. There are many to whom his work will seem a pictorial blasphemy. Great imitative talents have here been perverted to the use of an eccentricity both lamentable and revolting."

But the most violent onslaught of all was that by Charles Dickens in *Household Words*, 15th June 1850. It is worth quoting at length, particularly as it shows how the very word "Pre-Raphaelite" seemed to be like a red rag to a bull:

"In the fifteenth century a certain feeble lamp of art arose in the Italian town of Urbino. This poor light, Raphael Sanzio by name, . . . was fed with a preposterous idea of beauty. . . . This very fantastic whim effected a low revolution in art in this wise, that beauty came to be regarded as one of its indispensable elements. In this very poor delusion artists have continued until this present nineteenth century, when it was reserved for some bold aspirants to 'put it down.' The Pre-Raphael Brotherhood, ladies and gentlemen, is the dread Tribunal which is to set this matter right. . . .

"You come—in this Royal Academy Exhibition, which is familiar with the works of Wilkie, Collins, Etty, Eastlake, Mulready" (*and a dozen more*)—"you come in this place to the contemplation of a Holy Family. You will have the goodness to discharge from your minds all Post-Raphael ideas, all religious aspirations, all elevating thoughts; all tender, awful, sorrowful, ennobling, sacred, graceful,

or beautiful associations; and to prepare yourself as befits such a subject—Pre-Raphaelly considered—for the lowest depths of what is mean, odious, repulsive and revolting.

"You behold the interior of a carpenter's shop. In the foreground of that carpenter's shop is a hideous, wry-necked, blubbery, red-headed boy in a bed-gown, who appears to have received a poke in the hand from the stick of another boy with whom he has been playing in an adjacent gutter, and to be holding it up for the contemplation of a kneeling woman, so horrible in her ugliness that (supposing it was possible for any human creature to exist for a moment with that dislocated throat) she would stand out from the rest of the company as a monster in the vilest cabaret in France or the lowest gin shop in England. Two almost naked carpenters, master and journeyman, worthy companions of this agreeable female, are working at their trade; a boy with some small flavour of humanity in him is entering with a vessel of water, and nobody is paying any attention to a snuffy old woman who seems to have mistaken that shop for the tobacconist's next door, and to be hopelessly waiting at the counter to be served with half an ounce of her favourite mixture.

"Wherever it is possible to express ugliness of feature, limb or attitude, you have it expressed. Such men as the carpenters might

be undressed in any hospital where dirty drunkards in a high state of varicose veins are received. Their very toes have walked out of St Giles.

"This in the nineteenth century and in the eighty-second year of the Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Arts is the Pre-Raphael representation to us, ladies and gentlemen, of the most solemn passage our minds can approach."

Turgid enough stuff, and very strange as applied to a work which, in addition to its glorious colour, seems to us now far from irreverent in its dignified reticence and simple human feeling.

It is interesting to note how the different members were affected by the attack. Rossetti, though he had suffered less than the others, petulantly said that never again would he exhibit his works in public, a decision to which he adhered.

Millais, though bewildered and annoyed at first, for hitherto he had been one of fortune's spoilt children, was undismayed: after all, he had sold the despised picture.

As for Holman Hunt, though he was hit

hard, for his picture was unsold, his grim determination never wavered.

Next year they returned to the charge: Millais with "The Woodman's Daughter," "Mariana at the Moated Grange," and "The Return of the Dove to the Ark"; Holman Hunt with his "Valentine and Sylvia." Ford Madox Brown exhibited his large picture of "Chaucer at the Court of Edward III," and another artist, affected by their example, Charles A. Collins, "Convent Thoughts." All came under the lash of the critics, who exceeded their fury of the year before. The *Times*' attack will serve as a fair specimen:

"We cannot censure at present as amply or as strongly as we desire to do that strange disorder of the mind or eyes which continues to rage with unabated absurdity among a class of juvenile artists who style themselves P. R. B., which being interpreted means Pre-Raphael Brethren. Their faith seems to consist in an absolute contempt for perspective and the known laws of light and shade, an aversion to beauty in every shape, and a singular devotion to the minute accidents of their subjects, including or rather seeking out every excess of sharpness and deformity. Mr Millais, Mr

Hunt, Mr Collins, and, in some degree, Mr Brown, the author of a huge picture of Chaucer, have undertaken to reform art on these principles."

Things looked bad indeed. It did not matter so much to Millais, fortune smiled on him and, in spite of the frowns of the critics, he could always pay his way and more. But Rossetti, like Achilles, was sulking in his tent; Woolner had gone to Australia; Collinson had retired temporarily to a monastery; Hunt seriously thought of giving up Art and taking to farming, with a view to emigrating to Canada or Australia. However, things at last took a turn for the better. Ruskin's first letter to the *Times* appeared under the signature of "An Oxford Graduate," in which he generously praised the work both of Millais and Hunt, of which he went so far as to say: "As studies both of drapery and every minor detail there has been nothing in art so earnest or so complete as these pictures since the days of Albert Dürer."

The second letter followed the first, criti-

cising the Pre-Raphaelites in some detail, but giving much generous praise.

This proved the turning-point. The public were willing to follow where Ruskin led. More official encouragement, too, was not lacking. When Hunt's "Two Gentlemen of Verona" was sent on to the Liverpool Exhibition, on the close of the Royal Academy, it was awarded a prize of £50.

And so the battle was won. But the little Brotherhood was drifting apart. Woolner and Collinson were gone; Rossetti, who had never really taken to its tenets very seriously, was now immersed in Dante studies, painting wonderful, glowing little water-colours in illustration of themes drawn from the Italian poet.

Hunt and Millais were left to continue alone: they, too, each went his own way. In November 1853 Millais became an Associate of the Royal Academy—a symbol of the passing of his glorious, rebellious youth; and Hunt set off for the Holy Land.

In the succeeding chapters we shall follow out more fully the fortunes of each of the little

band, but though each in his own sphere reached distinction, yet there was loss as well as gain, and none of them were able quite to recapture the magic that marked the work of those brilliant days of youth.

CHAPTER TWO

FORD MADOX BROWN (1821-1893)

CHAPTER TWO FORD MADOX BROWN (1821-1893)

FORD MADOX BROWN WAS BORN IN Calais in 1821. His grandfather, Dr John Brown of Edinburgh, was a famous man in his day and his father Ford Brown, a ship's purser, or, as he called it, "a commissariat officer of the British Navy." The latter served part of his time on the famous *Arethusa*, and on the conclusion of peace became one of the numerous half-pay officers, who made their scanty incomes go as far as possible by living abroad in the little French and Flemish towns. It was during a temporary sojourn of his parents in Calais that Ford Madox Brown was born. His first art instruction was received in Bruges under an artist Gregorious, a pupil of David, and later at Ghent under Van Hanselaer, with whom he studied for more than a year.

But his most important tuition was received in Antwerp, under Baron Wappers, to whom he went during the year 1837, where he had a good general grounding in various art methods — oil, water-colour, pastel, fresco,

encaustic painting, modelling in wax, etching, lithography. In fact, a much more Catholic training than he would have received from a contemporary art school in England. A pencil drawing in the Tate Gallery, of a fellow-student painting, executed in Antwerp in 1839, gives us an inkling of the firmness of handling and directness of outlook which were to characterise his future work.

His oil painting of the period however was, like that of his master, heavy and dull in tone. At this time he began his first large historical painting, an ambitious effort for a youth of nineteen, "The Execution of Mary Queen of Scots," which he completed two years afterwards in Paris.

Even at this early stage however he was an originator. He was already tiring of the heavy bituminous backgrounds of his teachers; he was making experiments in lighting his pictures, not in the stereotyped studio fashion, but as if seen in the open air—an anticipation of the methods of the "plein air" school.

During a short visit to England in 1842 Madox Brown painted a portrait of his cousin,

Elizabeth Bromley, to whom he was married in the same year. Each of the two had a certain small income, amounting together to about £250 per annum, on which it was possible to live very comfortably in Paris. There for the present then they settled. Painted in Paris at this time was the picture "Parisina's Sleep." The subject represents the unfaithful wife of Prince Azo, who confirms her husband's suspicions by murmuring in her sleep the name of her lover. It is a typical specimen of the heavy opaque style of colouring which Madox Brown had learned from his teachers and had not yet thrown off.

But events were occurring in England which were soon to attract the artist thither. The New Houses of Parliament, "Her Majesty's Palace of Westminster," were in course of erection, and in 1842 a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire whether fresco painting could not be applied to the decoration of the interior, and a wide encouragement so given to national art. British artists were invited to submit cartoons dealing with subjects from British History, or the works of

Spenser, Shakespeare or Milton, three prizes of £300, three of £200 and five of £100 being offered for the most suitable works.

The cartoons were exhibited publicly in Westminster Hall, the first exhibition being in 1843. Soon Ford Madox Brown was at work on three large designs, "Adam and Eve," "Harold at Hastings" and the "Spirit of Justice," the first two exhibited in 1844, the third in the following year.

He was unsuccessful in gaining a prize, however, and his cartoons attracted little attention. It is interesting to note that at this time in Paris he produced a series of designs from "King Lear," a subject to which he was destined to return in future years.

In 1844 the Madox Browns left Paris for England, but next year his wife's failing health rendered another winter in England impossible, and in August of that year they set out for Italy, journeying leisurely by Brussels, Aix, Bâle, Modena, Bologna and Florence, and reaching Rome in the end of September.

The study of the works of the Italian masters had a great effect on the young painter, but

another influence of almost equal importance should be noted. Passing through Bâle he had an opportunity of seeing the works of the great German painter, Holbein, in the museum there, and the impression made on him by these was deep and permanent.

The individuality of the young painter was now thoroughly awakened. The facile handling obtained by following on the usual studio recipes no longer satisfied him. He wanted to tackle things for himself. To quote his own words, as given by his grandson, Ford Madox Hueffer, in his invaluable life of the painter: "Wishing to substitute simple imitation for nature for *scenic* effectiveness, and purity of natural colour for scholastic depth of tone I found no better way of doing so than to paint what I called a *Holbein of the nineteenth century*." In this picture then—a portrait of Mr Bamford, painted in 1846—we have the germ of the Pre-Raphaelite movement. An interesting episode of his stay in Rome was his introduction to the German painters, Cornelius and Overbeck, the founders, and apparently the only surviving members, of the Society of

"Nazarenes," or Pre-Raphaelites, formed in Rome in 1810. The Society had primarily for its motive a protest against the irreligion of the art world of its day. Its members wore monastic garb and conformed to monastic rule, living together in a building rented for the purpose: it was a religious rather than an artistic revival. Among their rules was an avoidance, so far as possible, of the use of the living model, a curious contrast to the methods adopted by their English successors to the title.

It was during his stay in Rome that Brown began work on his most important early picture: "Chaucer at the Court of Edward III."

Unfortunately the primary object of the visit to Italy—the restoration of his wife's health—was not attained; she rapidly became worse, and it was soon evident that there was little prospect of her recovery.

They set out for home in May 1846, but Mrs Brown died under painful circumstances in Paris, passing away as they drove through the streets to their hotel.

Madox Brown had now grown to full manhood. His student days—except in so far as

CHRIST WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET

National Gallery — MADOX BROWN

the artist to the end of his life must always be a student—may be said to have passed. He had a complete technical equipment at his disposal. His outlook had been widened by the study of Holbein and the great Italian masters. He was profoundly dissatisfied with the current art of his day, and was eagerly trying to strike out a new line for himself.

He had also had experience of the serious things of life. The romance of his marriage was soon clouded by his wife's ill-health. Her premature death inflicted a heavy blow upon him. It was some years before he recovered his former buoyancy of spirit. He seemed older than his years, reserved, rather melancholy, absorbing himself more and more deeply in his work. His long sojourn abroad seemed to have made half a foreigner of him. He was more accustomed to the sound of French than his own language.

In temper he was quick and rather hasty: he could not brook patronage—a characteristic which was later to have a considerable influence on his fortunes.

But though perhaps at first sight a little

unapproachable, behind, there was a great fund of geniality and good-fellowship. His artist friends agreed that there was no one so helpful a critic: his insight unerring, going straight to the roots; his advice simple and practical; his patience inexhaustible and his enthusiasm a continual support.

In his lighter moods he was a good companion, told a good story and sang a good song, for he was passionately fond of music.

Such is the figure of Ford Madox Brown then when he comes in touch with the little group of younger men working in London in the middle of the century, and with them helps to make artistic history.

In 1848 an important event took place—his second marriage—in some ways marked by unusual circumstances. During his visits to Stratford-on-Avon he made the acquaintance of a beautiful young girl, the daughter of a Herefordshire farmer. In spite of her youth —she was only fifteen—and the opposition of her widowed mother, a runaway marriage was carried out and Madox Brown settled down with his wife in a little house in Hampstead

where, after a while, his now pacified mother-in-law joined them. But, curiously enough, for a year or two he kept the marriage almost a secret from his artist friends His studio was in town, his house at Hampstead—then a rather inaccessible suburb—and he kept the two apart.

Meantime he was busy educating his young wife for her changed position. She wrote him daily letters from the house to the studio, to which he replied—noting improvement as time goes on. A drawing by her husband, dated 1848, reproduced in Mr Ford Madox Hueffer's life of the painter, shows her girlish charm at this time, and her more mature beauty is seen in the "Last of England," painted in 1856.

The death of his first wife was a great shock to Madox Brown and for a time his work stood still. But after a few months he produced the drawing "Our Ladye of Saturday Night" or, as he afterwards altered the title, "Our Ladye of Good Children." The picture is a very interesting one, as in it the painter adopts the purely human standpoint afterwards taken by the members of the P.R.B. in their religious

works. The scene depicted is the homely one of the mother bathing her child (Madox Brown appears to have been under the impression that the ceremony was confined to Saturday night), and the little attendant angel stands by holding the basin of water and towel. Originally a drawing in black chalk, it was worked on at intervals between 1846 and 1861, colour in the form of water-colour and pastel being added, until the final result is as we now see it in the Tate Gallery. Along with the portrait of Mr Bamford it was rejected at the Royal Academy of 1847 but was shown at the Free Exhibition.

Another work began in 1847 was the large picture "Wycliffe Reading his Translation of the Bible to John of Gaunt." Finished early next year, it was exhibited at the Free Exhibition at Hyde Park Corner along with "Our Ladye of Saturday Night."

It was the sight of these works which prompted Rossetti to write the impulsive letter to Madox Brown asking to be received by him as a pupil. The following quotation will give you an idea of its rather exaggerated style:

"The Parisina, the study in the manner of the early masters, 'Our Ladye of Saturday Night,' and the glorious works you have exhibited, have successively raised my imagination and kept me standing on the same spot for fabulous lengths of time." It is little to be wondered that the recipient was a little suspicious as to the genuineness of the tribute and he called on Rossetti with the letter in his hand to demand explanations. However he was quickly reassured, and in this way began a memorable association, which had far-reaching results on English art.

The actual lessons were not long continued, but the close friendship of the two men lasted until broken by Rossetti's death.

Introduced by Rossetti to Millais and Hunt, he was soon a member of their little coterie, though in a position apart, an older man with more serious tastes, who commanded respect as well as esteem.

Though there is a little doubt as to the precise date, it was in the Autumn or Winter of 1848 that the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood came into being. Madox Brown's position in

connection with it has been much discussed. It is certain he never became a member of the Brotherhood—he did not like societies—perhaps he was never asked to become a member. But there is no doubt as to the influence he exercised on the younger men. It was he who pointed the direction of the new movement. Before 1848 he was forsaking the old bituminous backgrounds and trying to give an open-air effect of lighting. He had already painted a modern Holbein, rendering Nature as faithfully and minutely as he could; also the literary element—seeking for a motive, which finally in its most exaggerated development brought the style into derision—was already present.

The critics and the public assumed his close sympathy with the movement, and he shared in the odium heaped on the young adventurers.

But in his turn he learned from the younger men. In 1851 we find him writing to an artist friend, telling him that he must adopt the method of painting on a wet white ground, used by Millais and Hunt, or he will soon be forced to, for their works kill everything else in the Royal Academy for brilliance.

Shakespearean subjects appealed strongly to Madox Brown, "King Lear" most of all, and we have already seen that in Rome he had produced a series of designs illustrating the play. In 1848-49 he gives us the first of the paintings drawn from the same source: "Cordelia at the Bedside of Lear." In its dramatic power and strong human interest it shows that Madox Brown had now really found his *métier*.

The huge Chaucer picture occupied him during 1850, and it was only by dint of superhuman efforts, culminating in a continuous spell of three days' incessant work, that he was able to complete it in time for the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1851, where it appeared along with Millais' "Mariana," the "Return of the Dove to the Ark," and the "Woodman's Daughter," and Hunt's "Two Gentlemen of Verona."

The picture was on the whole not unfairly treated by the Hanging Committee. On account of its large size—it occupied the space that might have been filled by a dozen smaller pictures—it was shown without the frame, and attracted a great deal of attention.

The picture was sold in 1855 for a small price; afterwards bought back by the artist, it remained a long time in his studio, and was finally sold to the Sydney Municipal Gallery in 1876 for £500. A small version now hangs in the Tate Gallery.

In the *Athenæum*, 24th May 1851, appeared the following:

"The composition, built up after the fashion of one of our most popular artists, contains many passages of great excellence, but there is much inequality in the conception and carrying out of the several characters.

. . . . . .

With such a demonstration of resource as Mr Brown has here made, there need be no doubt that, with a sober and discreet management of it, he will at no remote period acquire distinction within the walls in which he has this season broken ground."

Next year, in 1852, appeared one of Madox Brown's most famous works: "Christ Washing the Disciples' Feet." Its combination of realism and sincerity, its powerful design, its rich full colouring, certainly renders it his most important religious painting. In its original state the figure of Christ was represented as almost

THE LAST OF ENGLAND

Tate Gallery — MADOX BROWN

nude—He "laid aside His garments and took a towel and girded Himself"—but, as he so often did, Brown afterwards worked and reworked on the picture, the present rich harmonious colour resulting from these repaintings. The picture now hangs in the National Gallery.

Apart from its artistic power it is interesting as a collection of portraits of the little circle. The head of Christ was painted from F. G. Stephens and the heads of Holman Hunt, Dante Gabriel and W. M. and Christina Rossetti all appear among the disciples.

It was hung in the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1852 but badly skied—which led to an unpleasant incident with Grant—the future President of the Academy. Madox Brown, entering the room, had just caught sight of his picture, right up at the ceiling and was looking at it in speechless indignation. At that moment Grant came up to offer his congratulations, but the disgusted painter turned his back on him and marched out of the room. A trivial incident perhaps but characteristic of the man. It resulted in his ceasing to exhibit at the Academy, and ever afterwards he seemed to impute to

members a personal feeling of hostility to himself.

The following is the criticism by Frank Stone, A.R.A., which appeared in the *Athenæum;*

"No. 463 by Mr Ford Madox Brown is more ambitious. This artist appears to have studied at Valencia, where mulberries are plentiful as blackberries, and he has closely observed the works of Joannes, where purple tones are so predominant. In this picture it pervades everything—the habit, the naked limbs of the Saviour, and the dress of St Peter, who either feels himself unworthy of the honour done him by his Master, or by his feet's action makes us feel the water to be too hot. Certainly the copper utensil which contains it seems filled with either blood or raspberries undergoing the jam process. The Apostles seated at the table appear to take no interest in the lavation—appearing rather bored—so much has the artist rejected the conventional attitudes usual on this occasion."

But the picture now hangs in the National Gallery, one of the greatest works of the middle of the nineteenth century, while the critic's words have passed away like the lapping of the waves on the shore.

In 1852 Woolner, the sculptor, despairing of making a living at his art in London, set sail for the Australian gold diggings. Madox

Brown accompanied him as far as Gravesend, and this journey supplied him with the motive of perhaps his most popular work: "The Last of England." The picture was not completed until 1855. Not only is it the artist's most popular picture, but in it he carries out most successfully the P.R.B. ideals.

Here we have Pre-Raphaelism at its best. There is first the worthy motive: the pathos of the turning away, perhaps for ever, from one's native land, with all its present ties and all its old associations, to face amidst strange surroundings in a far distant clime the uncertainties of the future. Then as to the treatment, truth to nature and faithful rendering of detail, both are there. Nothing could be more scrupulous than the pains the painter took that everything should be absolutely true to fact. The main figures are portraits of himself and his wife. Not only was the seascape painted from Nature, but the figures were painted in cold weather out of doors in order to get the peculiar appearance the flesh assumes under such conditions! One pities Mrs Madox Brown acting as model under such trying circumstances.

In addition to these qualities we have others equally important if less obvious : a highly successful treatment of the difficult circular composition, the tondo of the Italians. Note the repeating lines of circle within circle and the rich and glowing harmony of colour.

In such works as this the P. R. B. style carries its own justification.

In the Catalogue of the Exhibition of his works, held in 1865, Ford Madox Brown gives the following analysis :

"This picture is in the strictest sense historical. It treats of the great emigration movement, which attained its culminating point in 1852. The educated are bound to their country by closer ties than the illiterate, whose chief consideration is food and physical comfort. I have, therefore, in order to present the parting scene in its fullest tragic development, singled out a couple from the middle classes, high enough through education and refinement to appreciate all they are now giving up, and yet depressed enough in means to have to put up with the dis-

comforts and humiliations incident to a vessel 'all one class.' The husband broods bitterly over blighted hopes and severance from all he has been striving for. The young wife's grief is of a less cantankerous sort, probably confined to the sorrow of parting with a few friends of early years. The circle of her love moves with her.

"The husband is shielding his wife from the sea spray with an umbrella. Next them in the background, an honest family of the greengrocer kind—father (mother lost), eldest daughter and younger children—make the best of things with tobacco, pipe, and apples, etc. Still further back, a reprobate shakes his fist with curses at the land of his birth, as though that were answerable for *his* want of success; his old mother reproves him for his foul-mouthed profanity, while a boon companion, with flushed countenance, and got up in nautical togs for the voyage, signifies drunken approbation. The cabbages slung round the end of the stern indicate, to the practised eye, a lengthy voyage: but for this their introduction would be object-

less. A cabin boy, too used to 'leaving his native land' to see occasion for much sentiment in it, is selecting vegetables for the dinner out of a boatful."

Literary? Yes it is, but here is the point: the story is told pictorially with great force. We do not really need the elaborate description in the Catalogue at all. We hardly need even the title, and we feel that the story could not have been told so effectively and the truth driven home so well in any other way.

The "Last of England" was the first of Madox Brown's pictures to achieve a great popular success. Not only was it received with a general chorus of praise, but he was successful in selling it for £150. After passing through other hands it was sold by auction at Christie's, where it realised a considerable figure, the purchaser being a Mr Plint, afterwards one of the painter's chief patrons. It now hangs in the Municipal Gallery, Birmingham, while a smaller replica in water-colour is in the Tate Gallery.

Recognition also came from the north. When "Christ Washing the Disciples' Feet"

was exhibited at the Liverpool Academy of 1856 it obtained the prize (£50) awarded there annually, and in 1858 the same honour was paid to his "Chaucer." At this time he was also engaged on the woodcut designs for Messrs Dalziel's Bible. The most famous of these, and one of his finest works is "Elijah and the Widow's Son," a fine version of which, in water-colour, is in South Kensington Museum (painted 1868).

Madox Brown had for some years now been working on one of his most ambitious pictures: "Work." It was begun in 1852 at Hampstead, where he took lodgings for the occasion. Excavations connected with the laying of water-pipes were in progress in Heath Street, and there he painted the background in the open air—using an old cab in bad weather as a shelter.

In 1856 Mr Thomas Edward Plint, who had formerly purchased at Christie's the "Last of England," gave him a definite commission for the picture, and he resumed the work on it with enthusiasm.

Mr Plint was a man of deep religious con-

victions. It was evidently the sermon and not the painting that appealed most to him, and I expect he must have worried Madox Brown, never too patient a man, with his anxious inquiries and suggestions: "Could you introduce both Carlyle and Kingsley and change one of the four fashionable young ladies into a *quiet*, *earnest*, *holy*-looking one, with a book or two and tracts."

During the painting of the picture his little boy Arthur, whose head he was using for the baby, died suddenly after less than a week's illness, and Brown records that he had to write Plint and ask for an instalment to pay the funeral expenses.

For the next five years the picture occupies his time. Carlyle and Maurice, the well-known preacher, both sat for it. Indeed the whole composition might be said to embody Carlyle's teaching. Martineau, the artist, appears as the horseman, Mrs Madox Brown as the lady with bell-like skirts.

When at last it was completed, feeling that in many ways it was his most important achievement, Brown set himself to devise

means for its appropriate exhibition. The Royal Academy he would have nothing to do with, and he disliked Societies of any kind. He determined therefore to hold an Exhibition of his own. The idea of a one-man show seems to have been a new one at the time, and he gathered together about a hundred paintings, ranging from the early "Manfred on the Jungfrau," dating from 1840, down to his recently completed work.

He threw himself with vigour into the preparations and the Catalogue, as we have seen, contains lengthy descriptions and explanations of the chief pictures. Mr Ford Madox Hueffer quotes some amusing suggestions from Rossetti, as to the best means of advertisement:

"You should begin by enormous placards with the one word 'WORK'—and on with this for a week or two. Then another week of 'MR F. M. BROWN'S WORK,' and then condescend to further particulars."

It is amusing to note that one of our most pushing young Post-Impressionists recently adopted a very similar method of bringing

his work prominently before the public. A luridly designed poster without name attached as the forerunner was seen in all the tube stations. The second edition gave the name full prominence!

"A Brown Mad Ox crossing a Ford" was another of Rossetti's happy suggestions.

The Exhibition was open from 10th March to 10th June 1865 and was visited by over 3000 people. The press reviews were almost without exception favourable, and for the first time the artist enjoyed well-merited recognition from the general public.

The artist's analysis and description of "Work" ran to several pages of the Catalogue. Summarised, the idea is an apotheosis of work, in its various manifestations.

Manual labour, typified by the navvies, occupies the central part of the picture; intellectual effort is presented in the figures of Carlyle and Maurice. Around we get by way of contrast the non-workers—the idle rich and the idle poor. The background is packed with incidents, each adding its own little contribution to the story.

Of course the weakness of such a painting is that the story—half-puzzle, half-sermon—really assumes too much importance. Unlike the "Last of England," which tells its own story, simply and unmistakably, it needs its pages of description, like the analytical programme attached to a piece of modern descriptive music. What redeems the picture is the power and vigour of the handling, though in weaker hands imitation of the same style soon becomes unutterably wearisome.

Until now Brown has persistently haunted out-of-the-way suburbs, but now, urged by his friends and particularly by Rossetti, he takes a house in town.

It is amusing how those we are apt to consider as unpractical visionaries, on occasion, display a very shrewd business capacity. Rossetti emerges in this case as the practical worldly friend, and never rests until he finally digs out the recluse. He tells him plainly that it is not a case entirely of making himself accessible to his friends; he must make himself accessible to the dealers.

Brown gives way, and takes a house in

Fitzroy Square. He is now a man of forty-four, and for the next ten years enjoys a well-earned period of greater ease and prosperity. He is kept busy with various work. His family affairs become more interesting and engrossing, his children—two daughters, Lucy and Caroline, and a son, Oliver Madox Brown, survive—are growing up and beginning to display great talent. He is becoming more and more associated with the firm of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co., for whom he makes many designs, chiefly cartoons for stained glass. This more decorative work has a reaction on his painting, and we find his later paintings distinguished by a greater decorative harmony, a toning down of the harshness of earlier years.

The house in Fitzroy Square becomes the scene of many social gatherings. Fortnightly "At Homes" are instituted, at which not only the members of their own little art circle are to be seen, but many other notable figures of the day.

But soon the shadows begin to close in. In 1874 his son, Oliver Madox, a youth of

nineteen and of most brilliant promise, died after a painful illness. It was a great blow to the painter, whose fondest hopes were centred in the future of the young man. As he wrote to his friend and patron, Mr Rae:

"What seemed likely to turn out the crowning reward of a life not overstocked with successes otherwise, is suddenly turned into a mockery and illusion."

The two daughters were both married: Caroline to Dr Hueffer, the musician; Lucy to W. M. Rossetti; and now the old people were left alone. Sadness descended on the house in Fitzroy Square. As an old servant said: "The place was never the same after the young ladies married and Master Nolly died."

Still the work goes on and other duties arise. Madox Brown's most important achievement during the last period of his life is the great series of Mural decorations for Manchester Town Hall, representing scenes from the history of the town. Brown was first engaged as an adviser. Finally, after protracted negotiations, during which he was much irritated

by the opinions of "Academicians" being asked, the whole series of twelve large panels was entrusted to him.

The execution occupied him from 1878 until 1892, the year before his death.

Of the various panels, the best known and perhaps the finest is "The Expulsion of the Danes from Manchester," a cartoon for which hangs in South Kensington Museum.

The task was rather a trying one, complicated by many petty quarrels. Brown was never a diplomatist, and the Manchester Councillors were not so pleasant to deal with as such patrons as his old friends, Mr Plint and Mr Rae. His health, too, began to fail, and he was a martyr to gout for ten years before his death. The mere physical demands of the work were considerable. In 1887 (when he was sixty-six years of age) he writes to Miss Mathilde Blind, the poetess, and one of his greatest friends of his later years: "Thursday I spent on a swing scaffold, putting the last touches to my work, at a height of 50 feet from the ground, hauled up by ten men with ropes."

Towards the end of his life a very unusual tribute was paid to the artist, which caused him much gratification. He was commissioned by a committee of artists and gentlemen to paint a replica of his picture of "Wycliffe on Trial," in order that it might be presented to the nation.

The painter was engaged on this commission until a few days before he died.

After his death the sum intended for this object was devoted to the purchase of his great picture "Christ Washing His Disciples' Feet," which now hangs in the National Gallery, a worthy monument to the painter's fame.

CHAPTER THREE

JOHN EVERETT MILLAIS

CHAPTER THREE JOHN EVERETT MILLAIS

THE YOUNGEST, BUT TECHNICALLY the most brilliant of the Pre-Raphaelites was John Everett Millais, in 1848 a boy of nineteen.

He was born at Southampton in 1829, the youngest son of Mr John William Millais, the descendant of an old Norman family in Jersey. Shortly after Millais' birth, the family returned to Jersey, and there he spent his earliest years. The father was known as the handsomest man in the island, was a good amateur musician, and had some artistic talent. He was an officer in the Jersey militia.

From his babyhood Millais played with pencils and paper. When he was six years old the family removed to Dinan in Brittany, where they remained for about two years.

The French soldiers there formed tempting subjects for the boy. On one occasion he and his brother were fascinated by a gigantic drum-major, and "Johnny" had just finished his drawing when a couple of the officers came and looked over his shoulder. They

were astonished at its cleverness, and took the drawing back to the barracks with them and talked of the infant prodigy they had discovered. Their tale, however, was received with incredulity, but they insisted. The company got quite excited, bets were offered and taken, and finally the little boy was sent for to settle the matter. He did so effectively by producing there and then a capital portrait sketch of the Colonel smoking his cigar.

His schooling was very irregular. He was sent to a school, but he had no idea of doing what he was told, and when the master tried to thrash him for disobedience he promptly turned and bit his hand. The result was expulsion! Fortunately his mother, a gifted and well-educated woman, took his education in hand herself, and gave him a good general grounding, but even in after life Millais could never be said to be a particularly cultured man. He took comparatively little interest in literature; his art sufficed for his working hours, music and sport for his leisure. Even in his childhood he was a great fisherman. One of the chief

residents in Jersey, Philip Raoul Lemprière, Seigneur of Roselle Manor, was a great friend of the boys, and in the ponds of Roselle Park, well stocked with perch and tench, he could fish to his heart's content. It is interesting to note that the figure of the "Huguenot" in the picture painted in 1852, was painted from General Lemprière, a grandson of the old Seigneur. A portrait sketch of his old uncle, John Evamy, fishing-rod in hand, done at the age of eight, shows wonderful precocity. It is reproduced in the *Life and Letters of Sir John Millais*, published by his son, John Guille Millais, in 1899. In the same book we have a water-colour portrait of his mother, painted by the elder brother William, in 1869, showing a strong likeness to her talented son.

Millais' first formal lessons in drawing were received from a Mr Bessel, a drawing-master in the island, who soon told the parents that they should take the boy to London, as he could teach him nothing more.

Next year accordingly they set out for London, with an introduction to Sir Martin

Shee, then President of the Royal Academy. Sir Martin's first words were prompt and emphatic: "Better make him a chimney-sweep than an artist"; but when he saw the boy's drawings he was so amazed that only an actual demonstration would induce him to believe they were genuine. But "Johnny" drew him the "Fight of Hector and Achilles," and he turned round and said that Nature evidently intended the boy to be an artist, and that it was the duty of his parents to help him all they could.

We find him then soon engaged busily in drawing at the British Museum, and in the winter of 1838 he enters Mr Sass's Academy of Art in Bloomsbury where, at the age of nine, he gains the silver medal of the Society of Arts for a drawing of the "Battle of Bannockburn."

At the age of ten he was admitted to the Royal Academy Schools, where he remained six years, carrying off prize after prize, culminating with the gold medal for a picture in oil entitled "The Benjamites Seizing their Brides." In the same year (1846) he contri-

buted to the Royal Academy Exhibition his painting of "Pizarro Seizing the Inca of Peru," truly a marvellous achievement for a boy of sixteen.

Already he and Holman Hunt had come across each other. The first meeting, vividly described by Holman Hunt, was in the British Museum, when Hunt was drawing in the Sculpture gallery, Millais, then a boy of fifteen, with bright brown curly hair falling over a broad white collar, and wearing a black velvet tunic with a belt.

Later they came together again in the Royal Academy Schools, to which Hunt had now obtained admission, and soon were close friends. About the same time as Hunt, Rossetti also appeared at the Academy Schools. The characters were assembling, the stage was being set for the appearance of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

Millais' family were now settled at 83 Gower Street, where a long room served Millais as a studio; and Holman Hunt was a frequent visitor there. On his earlier visits he had found that "Johnny's studio" was regarded

very much as a family sitting-room. His father played the flute, his mother read to him as he worked, and Johnny painted and talked at the same time

But one day—we are getting down now to about 1847, when Millais had begun his large picture of "Cymon and Iphigenia"—on Hunt's arrival he was met by Mrs Millais, very much agitated. "Johnny is behaving abominably. I want you, Hunt, to hear. You would not believe it, he shuts us out of the studio altogether. . . . For twelve days now neither his father nor I have been allowed to enter the room. Is that the way to treat parents?"

When the two emerged from the studio some hours after and joined the old folks, relations were a little strained at first, but soon Johnny and his mother were engaged in a game of backgammon, the father had got his guitar, and family peace was restored.

The picture "Cymon and Iphigenia," however, did not meet with the same success as the "Pizarro" subject of the previous year, being rejected at the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1847. It was an elaborate composition

TATE GALLERY

CHRIST IN CARPENTER'S SHOP

MILLAIS

in the old style, showing especially the influence of Etty. Perhaps its ill-success made Millais all the more anxious to break away from the old traditions and strike out on new lines.

He had now had a very thorough training, was an amazing craftsman, and full of energy and enthusiasm. He had outgrown the physical delicacy of his youth and was now active and athletic. He and Holman Hunt especially were great friends, had endless discussions on art, and worked a good deal together.

After the momentous meeting when the P.R.B. came into existence, Millais set to work on his first picture in the new style. The subject was drawn from Keats' poem "Isabella," based on an old story by Boccaccio. The company is seated at table, among them the two lovers, so conscious of each other's presence

> "They could not sit at meals but feel how well
> It soothed each to be the other by."

Conventional composition is set aside, naturalness is aimed at, and everything is depicted with the most scrupulous realism. The figures were painted from the artist's own friends and

relations. Mrs Hodgkinson, the wife of his step-brother, was the model for Isabella; Millais' father is the man wiping his mouth, William Rossetti is the Lorenzo, D. G. Rossetti appears at the end of the table drinking out of a glass.

It was started in November 1848 and Millais worked at fever-heat to complete it for next year's Academy. The newspaper comments were on the whole favourable, though the critic of Frazer's Magazine remarks: "Like Mr Brown, however, this young artist, although exhibiting unquestionable genius, is evidently enslaved by preference for a false style."

By most people, however, the work was looked on as a sort of pictorial joke.

Next year Millais returned to the charge with three pictures: "Christ in the House of His Parents," "Ferdinand and Ariel," and a portrait group, "Grandfather and Child." We have already seen the reception they met, the religious picture being especially singled out for obloquy. It is strange to read these violent tirades now. The picture as it hangs in the Tate Gallery seems to our eyes to express the

truth with simplicity and directness. It lacks the emotional intensity of Rossetti's "Annunciation," but has a dignified reticence of its own. In craftsmanship it combines skilful composition, and minute and scrupulous detail, with rich and powerful yet always harmonious colour.

In many ways we might consider it the central work produced during the existence of the P.R.B.

The painting was carried out most scrupulously on Pre-Raphaelite principles. Many preliminary drawings were made. In the Tate Gallery is a complete pen-and-ink drawing for the composition, which in several respects differs from the arrangement finally adopted.

The background was painted in an actual carpenter's shop. The head of the carpenter was painted from Mr Millais, senior; but the arms were taken from a real carpenter, in order to get the characteristic muscular development. A great difficulty was the flock of sheep. Millais solved it by getting two sheeps' heads from the butcher and painting these in different positions. It will be noticed that the wicker-

work fence only allows the heads to be seen, and so the trouble of supplying bodies was avoided.

For a number of years the picture hung in the Tate Gallery on loan, and it was quite a shock when in 1921 we learned that the sum of £10,000 had been offered for it on behalf of the Melbourne Art Gallery, and that unless this sum could be raised, the picture would be lost to us. Fortunately, largely owing to the generosity of private donors, the necessary funds were raised and the picture secured for the nation.

The affair caused some stir at the time and certain writers to the press did not hesitate to characterise the action of the Gallery authorities as selfish and ill-judged. "Here," they said, "we have one of our Colonies struggling to build up an Art Collection, and amid all the wealth at our disposal, we grudge them one picture. Surely a churlish and short-sighted policy." At first sight it sounds plausible, but I think on consideration most of us will agree that this was a special case. Here we have a unique picture, a very important link in the

chain of the evolution of British Art, a picture the story of which is now art history. From the point of view of the general art student, wherever he come from, surely it is better to have this work in our own National Collection, taking its place along with other works of its class, so that the whole movement may be studied in sequence, rather than that it should be hung alone—divorced from its fellows—in a Gallery at the other side of the globe.

At the same time it is pleasant to record that the authorities of the Melbourne Gallery, to whom much credit is due for the energetic and intelligent way they are building up a fine Collection, have this year (1923) succeeded in obtaining another fine Millais for their Gallery —the famous "Rescue" (a fireman carrying children from a burning house)—painted in 1855.

The "Ferdinand Lured by Ariel" is an even more brilliant piece of painting than the larger "Christ in the House of His Parents." The background of foliage is full of the most exquisite detail, which yet never obtrudes itself unpleasantly, but remains subordinate to the main

object, the figure of Ferdinand. In this respect Millais is infinitely superior to either Madox Brown or Holman Hunt, whose detail often is intensely irritating.

The head of Ferdinand was painted from his friend, F. G. Stephens, entirely at one sitting. From ten to nearly five the artist worked continuously, almost without a word. At last he said: "There, old fellow, it is done," and laid down his brushes. Stephens was so stiff, leaning on a stick in the required position, that he could not move, and the athletic young Millais lifted him up bodily and carried him to the dining-room, where some wine revived him.

Very striking is the brilliance of colour especially seen in the red coat and blue sleeve of Ferdinand. Hunt and Millais had by this time adopted their special method for obtaining this brilliance. They worked on a white canvas; then just before painting on any part, a very thin coat of white (from which the surplus oil had been extracted on blotting-paper) was spread on with a palette-knife—so thin that the pencil lines beneath were still visible. On this slightly wet—or "tacky"—ground

the colour, as transparent as possible, was applied in small touches with soft-haired brushes.

Despite the critics, the "Christ in the House of His Parents" was bought by a dealer named Farrer for £150, who amused himself by pasting on the back of it all the adverse criticisms.

With the "Ferdinand and Ariel" Millais was at first not so fortunate, as the dealer who commissioned it for £100, alarmed by the hostile criticisms, refused to accept the picture. However, a purchaser turned up shortly afterwards in a very pleasant way. A friend brought a stranger to the studio, who praised the picture so much that Millais made sure he would buy it. However, no offer was made, and the two departed. When the disappointed painter, however, took up the picture to put it away, he found underneath it a cheque for £150.

In next year's Academy Millais was represented by three pictures: "The Return of the Dove to the Ark," "Mariana at the Moated Grange" and "The Woodman's Daughter."

The "Mariana" is probably the most astonishing *tour de force* in colour produced during the existence of the P.R.B., the intense blue of

the dress contrasting strikingly with the equally vivid red of the seat. One might make the criticism that the picture hardly expresses the languor of the poem, but as a painting, it is one of the most astonishing things produced even by Millais. The reception accorded to these pictures was a repetition of that of the year before, and it looked as if the young men were about to be snowed under altogether, when Ruskin's two letters appeared, warmly praising the work both of Millais and Holman Hunt.

Soon the tide began to turn. Ruskin's name carried weight, both with the art world and with the public, as none other could, and the P.R.B.'s began to breathe more freely.

In the summer and autumn of 1851 we find Millais, along with his brother William, Holman Hunt and Collins, out in the country near Kingston, busy with his great picture of the following year, the "Death of Ophelia." On a little tributary of the Thames, the Ewell, he found exactly the background he wanted, the pool overhung by the trailing willow, and in the bright summer days transferred it leaf by leaf, blossom by blossom, to the canvas.

Miss Siddall was the model for "Ophelia," and so conscientious were both painter and model, that she actually lay in a bath of water, so that the correct appearance of the wet draperies should be exactly reproduced. Unfortunately the painter was so engrossed in his task that the lamp which kept the water warm was allowed to go out, and the luckless model caught a severe chill. The work now hangs in the National Gallery, and though painted seventy years ago, preserves its jewel-like brilliance of colour apparently as freshly as if it had been painted yesterday.

Those were wonderful days. It was about this time that talking to his friend, Mr Combe of Oxford, and rattling along in his usual careless way, Millais said: "People had better buy my pictures now, when I am working for fame, than a few years later when I shall be married and working for a wife and children." Years after, a friend who was present recalled the conversation. "Ah, Mr Millais," he said, "you have left your first love, you have left your first love."

With the exhibition of the "Ophelia" and

the "Huguenot" at the Academy, in 1852, Millais' period of struggle may be said to close. Crowds stood before the pictures, and both were sold for considerable sums.

Next year he was made an Associate of the Royal Academy.

An irresistible charm marked his personality in these early days. Arthur Hughes records a visit to the studio, and notes how the whole household revolves round Millais as its sun: the gentle, good-natured father, the clever rather sharp mother, the slightly indolent elder brother—the last a fine musician, with a magnificent tenor voice, and a painter of charming landscapes in water-colour.

In Holman Hunt's reminiscences we also get a fine picture of the rather spoiled young "darling of the gods."

Hunt had gone down to Fairlight, near Hastings, where Lear—Lear of the nonsense verses—was staying, and Millais wrote suggesting a week-end visit. Lear had never met the young artist, and asked what he was like. Hunt gave him a most glowing description.

"Um," said Lear, doubtfully, "isn't he a bit apt to lord it over other people?"

"Well," said Hunt, "you know there are men who are good-nature itself, but who have a knack of always making others carry their parcels."

"Anyhow," said Lear, "I shan't carry his."

"Yes, you will," said Hunt, "you won't be able to refuse."

The sequel was most amusing. In the morning they went down to the shore by Fairlight Cliffs, where Millais found a lot of cuttlefish bones. Nothing would satisfy him but that he must take them home, and he soon filled his handkerchief.

At the end of ten minutes he turned to Hunt: "Carry these for me, like a good fellow, do!"

"No," said Hunt, "leave them here and we'll get them on the way back."

But that wouldn't satisfy him. They might get trodden on. Then turning to Lear he said: "You take them for me, King Lear!"

Lear, doubled up with laughter, meekly took the parcel and carried it.

Millais was now making many friends, one of the closest being John Leech of *Punch*, who introduced him to the delights of hunting.

Commissions poured in on him. He was one of fortune's favourites, but carried his honours so buoyantly that no one grudged him his success. Despite a certain jealousy of the older men, and the growls of a section of the press, he was undoubtedly a popular favourite.

In 1855 he married Euphemia Chalmers Gray, whose beautiful face appears in the "Order of Release," painted in 1853, and settled down in Annot Lodge, in Perthshire.

In the same year was exhibited "The Rescue," one of his most popular works, a fireman carrying three children from a burning house, and restoring them to the arms of the ecstatic mother.

An amusing commentary on his attitude to the older Academicians is the history of the hanging of the work. When Millais went in on Varnishing Day he found to his annoyance that it was skied. He there and then tackled the members of the Hanging Com-

mittee, threatened to resign and withdraw his pictures, and altogether made such a fuss, that the picture was rehung in a better place.

To the first year of his married life belong the beautiful "Autumn Leaves," painted in his garden at Annot Lodge, and the "Blind Girl," the background near Winchelsea, two of his finest works, and both exhibited in the Royal Academy of 1856.

But we are now passing to a period less interesting than the stirring years of his youth. His life now partakes more of the quality of quiet domesticity, and is mostly spent at Annot Lodge.

In 1857 he produces his great picture "Sir Isumbras at the Ford," the old battle-worn knight, carrying two little children on his big charger across the water.

Its reception was hostile. The horse had given Millais a lot of trouble, he had painted and repainted it, but of the dignity and poetic beauty of the work there could be no doubt. Ruskin said: "This is not a fiasco, it is a catastrophe;" but, on the other hand, Thackeray, now a valued friend of the painter's, "put his

arms round his neck and said: 'Never mind, my boy, go on painting more such pictures.'"

Another valued friend appeared as the purchaser. When Mrs Millais was going up to the door of their London house one evening she found on the doorstep a very shabby-looking little man, who asked for Mr Millais. Thinking it was a tramp, or a beggar, she tried to turn him away, and when he said he wished to buy the picture, she thought she had to deal with a harmless lunatic, and gently tried to persuade him to go.

But the shabby individual explained that he was Charles Reade, the novelist, and though he was not a rich man he must have that picture, even though it was guarded by so charming a dragon.

The subsequent history of the picture is interesting. After Reade's death it came into the possession of Mr John Graham of Skelmorlie, and on his death in 1886 was purchased by Mr Robert Benson. In 1892 Millais got the picture back and repainted the horse, adding richer trappings, the alteration in this case, as in many of Madox Brown's

works, being a distinct improvement, though an interval of thirty-five years had taken place, and Millais' usual style was now very different from the minute handling of his early years.

But already Millais is beginning to depart from the minute detail of the pre-Raphaelite years. We might take the large picture, the "Vale of Rest," as definitely closing this first period, and even here we find the landscape background much more broadly treated than in the earlier works, and the searching detail concentrated more on the foreground incidents.

It was painted in Perthshire in 1858, and the cool evening light of the north is seen in the sky.

We are told that Millais had great trouble with one of the figures. He worked at it for six weeks, painting it again and again, never satisfying himself, and getting more and more worried over it, until his wife boldly stole the picture and hid it away for a few days. Then when he came back to it he saw it with clear eyes and all went well.

In 1863 Millais becomes a full member of the Academy, and though he still goes to

Scotland annually to fish and to shoot, and though one of his best landscapes, "Chill October," is painted there in 1871, London becomes his permanent residence, his studio being at 7 Cromwell Place, South Kensington, and later at Palace Gate.

Another phase of his work which occupied a great deal of attention from 1855-65 was his drawings for book illustration. In 1855, along with a number of other artists, we find him engaged on the illustration of Moxon's *Tennyson*, and afterwards he contributes a great series of illustrations to *Cornhill*, *Good Words*, *Once a Week*, and other publications.

I have already referred to the important part played by these woodcut illustrations in the popularisation of art in this country. A very interesting Exhibition was held at the Tate Gallery during the year 1923 of "Book Illustrations of the Sixties," including a selection of drawings, burnished proofs and actual wood blocks, drawn chiefly from the collection of Mr Harold Hartley, and including examples of the work of all the leading men—

Millais, Rossetti, Madox Brown, Sandys, Arthur Hughes, and many others.

Mr Hartley also contributes an invaluable foreword on the process used, full of interesting information, from which the following particulars are culled.

The old style of wood engraving has now of course been superseded by the modern methods of photographic reproduction, but whatever the merits of the new processes—and in the power of producing what is virtually a facsimile of the original they are unrivalled—yet there was much that was beautiful in the old work, and when the block cutter was a skilled craftsman it was wonderful how near he got to the quality of the original. The clean, clear line of the wood block, too, had its own particular beauty. Much of the trouble that Rossetti, for instance, had with the engraving of his blocks was that he had not sufficiently studied the process, and in place of firm definite lines, that the engraver could follow without hesitation, he gave him highly wrought work, sometimes of rather a nebulous character. One might almost say that in some

cases—as for instance the engraving of "King Arthur and the Weeping Queens," from Moxon's *Tennyson*, that a good deal of the beauty of the design is due to the engraver.

The first reproductions from wooden blocks were, strictly speaking, woodcuts, as distinct from wood engravings—that is, the drawing was cut on the block (made of soft wood) with a knife, the knife being drawn towards the operator. Thomas Bewick (1753-1828) was the first to introduce a new method, using instead of the knife, a graver, similar to that used on metal plates, and which was used like a chisel, pushed from the craftsman, instead of being drawn towards him. Also, instead of the soft wood plank, hard box-wood—cut against the grain and so not being liable to split—was used.

The surface of the block was covered with a thin coating of Chinese white, which was very pleasant to work on. The drawing then was made by the artist direct on the block. The engraver next set to work, cutting away the lights, leaving the lines standing up as ridges. In the process the drawing was neces-

sarily destroyed, and the inconvenience of this led to some artists having a photograph—photography was just beginning to be used—of their drawing made to act as a guide. In 1864 a Mr Walter Roberts hit on a method of printing the photograph on the wood block, which enabled the original drawing to be preserved. But the bulk of the drawings by Millais and others of the school were made direct on the wood block.

The block was made "type high"—about an inch thick, the same height as printing type, so that it could be used in the printing press along with ordinary type.

Great care was taken in the printing. The finished block was first given to the proof-taker, who carefully inked it by hand with a special ink. The impression was then taken on India paper, and was carefully rubbed off by hand with a burnisher, the pressure being graduated according to the depth of tone required. The proof was then sent to the artist for approval, and many of the examples shown in the Exhibition have marginal notes by the artist suggesting alterations.

When the actual printing in the press cam
to be done, care was taken by backing parts
the block with layers of paper, to get greate
pressure on different parts, and so to get a
near as possible to the effect of the trial proo

To come back now to Millais, his paintin
the "Boyhood of Raleigh" of 1870 show
quite a change of style. In place of the minut
detail of the P.R.B. we have a much broade
handling, and in the treatment of the distan
sea, with its white crests, an atmospheri
truth absent in the earlier work. He is no
a middle-aged man with a family, and th
two boys represented are his own children.

Of the same year is the "Knight-Errant
remarkable as one of the few important ex
amples of his treatment of the nude.

In the "North-West Passage" of 187
this freedom of handling becomes still mor
striking, the whole large canvas being painte
with magnificent breadth and assuranc
Technically it is regarded by some as th
artist's masterpiece, and yet when we thin
of the gem-like works of his youth, with the
intensity of feeling, combined with searchin

detail and glowing colour, we feel that something vital has been lost.

It is not merely a change in technique. The gradual change from a minute and meticulous handling in youth to a broader and more summary method in later years is a phenomenon frequently to be observed in artists' work, as for instance in the case of both Rembrandt and Velazquez. Perhaps the mere physical change in the eyesight caused by advancing years has a good deal to do with it. But in the case of the last-mentioned artists increased breadth of handling goes side by side with more profound insight and deeper significance. The later Millais, we must admit it, tends to become rather commonplace.

This is evident a good deal in his portraits, though now and again we get a brilliant piece of work, like the "Mrs Jopling" of 1879, now in the National Gallery.

As a sheer piece of painting probably he never did anything finer than the "Yeoman of the Guard" of 1876, powerful in colouring, magnificent in the vigour of its brushwork.

Perhaps in emulation of Sir Joshua, he painted in his later years a series of child studies. Certainly here he succeeded in striking the popular note; and reproduced in colour by such papers as the *Illustrated London News* they had a great vogue. But we cannot say that they tended to raise the level of the public taste.

In Max Beerbohm's caricatures of Rossetti and his circle there is a delicious drawing of "A Momentary Vision that once appeared to the young Millais."

The young painter, tall and slim, with curly hair, stands at his easel painting his picture of "Ferdinand and Ariel." The vision appearing to him, which causes him to drop palette and brushes in horror, is the figure of a stout, florid old gentleman in knickerbockers, with deer-stalker cap and white side whiskers, on whose knee is seated a demure little person in a mob cap—"Cherry Ripe."

Millais had his full share of public honours. He was created a Baronet in 1885. He was an Officer of the Legion of Honour, and a Member of the Institut de France. Oxford,

Cambridge and Durham Universities conferred degrees upon him. In February 1896, on the death of Lord Leighton, he was made President of the Royal Academy. His health was failing, however, and he died in August of the same year.

Millais was undoubtedly one of the great figures of the Victorian era, and in the popularisation of art, which was one of the chief features of the period, no one played a more important part.

CHAPTER FOUR

WILLIAM HOLMAN HUNT

CHAPTER FOUR WILLIAM HOLMAN HUNT

BOTH MILLAIS AND ROSSETTI SEEMED born to be the spoilt children of fortune; success came to them easily, almost as a matter of course. With Holman Hunt it was different: his early struggles for a bare livelihood were severe. More than once he nearly gave in: once he was saved only by Millais' generous help. He struggled, too, with his art; things did not come easily to him there. Throughout his life he wrestled with it as Jacob wrestled with the angel.

In his youth he was a strange mixture of diffidence and self-assurance: shy and timid in social intercourse, but dogged and tenacious in his opinions. He also had extraordinary perseverance, hanging on like grim death. It is difficult to overestimate his importance in the history of the P.R.B. movement. Doubtless it was the infectious enthusiasm of Rossetti that resulted in the definite formation of a Society with a programme, and the results of the feeling of mutual co-operation cannot be overrated, but when it came down to the sheer

plodding hard work, the staying power, here Hunt was a tower of strength. And though he had not the personal fascination of Rossetti or Millais, he was probably the superior of both in intellectual power.

In his two volumes, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, published in 1905, he gives his own story of the formation of the Society. He makes no secret of his belief. "L'Etat c'est moi," said Louis XIV, and Holman Hunt makes a somewhat similar claim regarding the P.R.B.

One thing indeed is true, that whereas the others dallied with the movement for a little and then turned "to fresh woods and pastures new," Hunt hung on. One might say he did not widen his horizon. He continued steadily on his own path, even when it became a lonely furrow.

But though he perhaps was not conscious of it, something of glamour fades out of his work after the early years. He never recaptures the rapture of "The Hireling Shepherd," with its wonderful interlacing design and gorgeous colour. In design we find his strongest point.

Some of his early drawings are beautiful in this respect, though the line has not the sensitive beauty of Millais' line. Unflinching as he is in the painting of elaborate detail, he has not Millais' power of preserving the relative importance of the different parts. As a colourist he is inferior to both Millais and Rossetti. Occasionally, as in the "Hireling Shepherd," he achieves a glowing splendour, but many times the result is marred by harsh and garish tones. He has not Millais' power of using the most vivid hues and yet preserving a harmony, nor Rossetti's extraordinary gift for making of colour a personal language of his own. In most cases we get his works at their best when reproduced in black and white.

William Holman Hunt was born in Wood Street, Cheapside, on 2nd April 1827. His father was in business, the manager of a warehouse. A serious, upright man, whose lines had not fallen in very pleasant places, and who had not the gift of taking life easily.

He encouraged his son's interest in art at first, and told him that every wise man had a hobby with which to occupy his spare time,

but was genuinely distressed that as he grew older this "dangerous taste for drawing" increased beyond these narrow bounds.

To counteract the tendency the boy was taken from school and put into a business house at the age of thirteen, but when he reached the age of sixteen he had definitely made up his mind. He had been busy meantime using all his spare time in experiments with paints and brushes—he had made a portrait of old Hannah, the orange seller,—and now he determined to burn his boats and leave business for good. His father reluctantly gave his consent, and soon we find him busily engaged drawing from the antique in the British Museum.

It was while he was working there that he first met Millais. It was Hunt's great ambition to enter the Royal Academy Schools, but his first attempt was a failure. He set to work and prepared a new set of drawings and tried again with no better result. Doggedly he tackled it once more and got in at the third attempt.

It is interesting to hear, when we look at the

hard, precise and meticulous handling of his mature works, that he considers his great fault in those early days was a careless, slovenly style of working.

In the Academy Schools he meets young Millais again and gradually the acquaintance ripens to a close friendship. He becomes a frequent visitor to the studio in Gower Street. The two young fellows work together and talk art perpetually together. Hunt borrowed Ruskin's *Modern Painters* from a friend and sat up nearly all night reading it—it seemed to have been written specially for him.

In the winter of 1846-47 they were working together, Millais on his "Cymon and Iphigenia," Hunt on his "Eve of St Agnes." At one stage Millais was sick of his draperies, and they exchanged; he painted in a head on Hunt's picture, and Hunt supplied some of the drapery on his.

Millais' picture was rejected but Hunt's was hung in the Royal Academy of 1847. Rossetti told him it was the finest thing in the Exhibition. He was fortunate enough to sell the picture for £70.

Next year is the momentous year of the formation of the P.R.B., and Hunt, Millais and Rossetti are all closely associated.

Hunt has now left his father's house—for some time he has managed by strenuous work to pay his way—and Rossetti is sharing his studio, and to some extent working under his tuition, at his first important picture, "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin."

They make a strangely assorted pair: Hunt methodical, plodding and conscientious; Rossetti erratic, at times indolent beyond measure, but when he got immersed in a new design forgetting everything else—home, meals, engagements—he let them all go. He sat through the night, sleeping for an hour or two on his seat, taking up the work again when he woke, eating whatever was at hand when he felt hungry.

In the "Mary Virgin" picture the little angel gave him untold trouble. It was painted again and again and model after model was tried. At last Gabriel lost all control of himself, stamped and stormed at the unfortunate child who was sitting, the child howled, and there was pandemonium.

It was too much for the sober-minded Hunt. "After this scene, which destroyed my tranquillity of mind, further work that day was out of the question."

And so Gabriel was taken for a walk in Regent's Park and solemnly lectured, and told that unless he mended his ways he must find a studio of his own. "Unless he could preserve a calmer demeanour we must separate."

However, he took it very well, apologised, and behaved better in future.

At this time an adventurer, Nockalls Cottingham by name, appeared on the scene and managed to swindle both Holman Hunt and Woolner, by obtaining on the pretext of a future commission sketches for which he never paid. It is amusing to note that in tackling Rossetti we find the biter bit. Rossetti got money in advance from him, for drawings which he never supplied!

Hunt's picture "Rienzi" was duly finished and appeared in the Royal Academy of 1849, along with Millais' "Isabella," and both pictures attracted a considerable amount of attention.

Augustus Egg, the Royal Academician, acted as a very good friend to the young artist, as through his good offices the picture was sold to a Mr Gibbons for £100.

So with Rossetti, "a perfect travelling companion," Hunt sets off on a trip abroad, visiting Paris, Antwerp, Bruges, widening his knowledge and seeing new things.

Now comes the crucial year 1850. In that year Rossetti exhibits his "Annunciation" at the Free Exhibition, Millais and Hunt, "Christ in the House of His Parents" and "A Christian Missionary Pursued by Druids," at the Royal Academy. The cat is out of the bag now, the cryptic initials have been read, and the storm bursts.

It is really Millais who bears the brunt of the attack, and when Hunt calls at Gower Street, he finds the parents very much upset. Mrs Millais is in a terrible state, and Rossetti is the scapegoat: "Ah, I don't like the look of him, he's a sly Italian, forestalling you by sending his picture to an exhibition where it was seen with your joint initials on it, a week before the pictures by you and Jack could ap-

pear." As a matter of fact that was rather unfair to Rossetti: his picture was behind, and the receiving day of the Free Exhibition was later than that of the Royal Academy, giving him a little more time; though not adopting the leisurely methods of the Royal Academy, it was able to open a week sooner. In addition to that, Rossetti evidently preferred to pay for wall space and ensure his picture being exhibited rather than risk rejection by the Royal Academy, as he had adopted a similar procedure with regard to the "Girlhood of Mary Virgin" in the previous year.

But Mrs Millais was not so very far wrong when she added:

"It is the forming of yourselves into so large a body and all the talking that has done the mischief. I wish that you had never had anything to do with *that* Rossetti."

However, after all, Millais sold his picture, while the "Druids" come back to the artist unsold. It is now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Rossetti's picture was also unsold.

For a while Hunt was hard put to it, and was glad to accept work repairing the paint-

ings by Rigaud in Trinity House at a couple of guineas a day, where by strenuous work for a week or two he managed to amass £30.

By Millais' good offices a piece of good luck occurred to him in the appearance of a purchaser for the "Druid" picture, but the £160 received soon dwindled away.

Intent on a new picture, a scene from Shakespeare's "Two Gentlemen of Verona," he goes down to Knole Park, Sevenoaks, to paint in the landscape background. Miss Siddall sat for him as Sylvia, and he set himself strenuously to get it ready for the next year's Royal Academy. At last it was finished, and he laid down his brushes and went to pay a long postponed visit to Millais. During his absence Madox Brown came round, and knowing him as an old friend, the landlady let him go in and look at the picture.

Madox Brown's subsequent letter is a fine example of the cordial feeling existing in the little coterie.

"My Dear Hunt," he writes, "I could not pass this evening in peace if I did not write to tell you how noble I think your picture . . .

it makes me feel shame that I have not done more all the years I have worked. I have been to see Millais. His pictures are wonders in colour and truth; in fine, admirable in all they intend, but I like yours better for my own use, although there are qualities in Millais which never have been attained and perhaps never again will be. If Rossetti will only work, you will form a trio which will play a great part in English Art. . . . I have had serious thoughts of joining P.R.B. on my pictures this year, but in the first place I am too old to play the fool . . . but the best reason against it is that we may be of more service to each other as we are than openly bound together. I wish you all the success you deserve."

The last sentences define pretty exactly Madox Brown's relationship to the P.R.B. He is in it all but the name. But gratifying though the support of friends undoubtedly was, it did not entirely make up for official censure and public neglect. Not only was the picture returned to Hunt unsold, but his patrons became shy. A commission for illustrations to Longfellow was cancelled. No more portraits were to be obtained.

Hunt applied for the post of draughtsman

for a Mosul Expedition, under Layard, and would have got it had he not been a day too late.

In the nick of time come Ruskin's two letters, which saved the situation. Millais and Hunt, after waiting a day or two, wrote him a joint letter of thanks, and a day or two after Ruskin and his wife drove over to Gower Street, and thus began Hunt's lifelong friendship with the great art critic.

But just at the time, however, circumstances still pressed hardly on him, and he seriously thought of giving up art altogether and going to a yeoman uncle to study farming, with a view to migrating to the Colonies. But when he broached this plan to Millais, "Johnny" would have none of it. He had just repaid his parents £500 for what they had expended on his education, and had still more money on hand, and it was Hunt's, every penny of it that he required. Hunt went away expostulating, "But what would your parents say?"

However, the parents heartily supported the generous offer, and the upshot of it was

that a few weeks later Hunt and Millais were both out at Ewell, Millais busy with the background of his "Ophelia," Hunt with that for the "Hireling Shepherd."

The "Two Gentlemen of Verona" meantime had been sent to the Liverpool Art Gallery, and almost every post brought criticisms in prose or in verse, mostly anonymous, and usually scurrilous. Finally in disgust Hunt said to Millais one night that he was going to write to the Liverpool Committee and demand an explanation as to why they had not awarded to his picture their annual prize of £50. Fortunately the letter was not dispatched, for next morning a letter from Liverpool arrived, awarding him the coveted prize. The picture was afterwards bought by Mr Miller, one of the Committee.

It was at this time, working at Worcester Park Farm, that Hunt conceived the idea for perhaps his most famous picture, now generally known by the title of "The Light of the World." It illustrates the verse: "Behold I stand at the door and knock."

The Saviour is represented standing in the

moonlight, lantern in hand, rapping at the closed door. It is the first of the symbolic religious pictures which are so closely associated with Holman Hunt's name, in which realism and symbolism are so closely intertwined.

The scene is imagined as by moonlight, and so he set out to paint it, building a little sentry-box in the palm-house garden, in which he worked by the light of a single candle. One night the village constable stalked him, thinking he was running down the local ghost. But moonlight nights were not very numerous, and the picture was afterwards finished at Cheyne Walk, where from 9 P.M. to 4 A.M. the painter worked at the window—noted as one of the curiosities of the route by the passing busmen.

His neighbour Carlyle heard about the picture, came and saw it, and gave some outspoken criticisms. Holman Hunt quotes them in full in his book.

"Do you suppose that Jesus walked about bedizened in priestly robes and a crown, and with yon jewels on His breast and a gilt aureole round His head?"

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

St Paul's Cathedral — Holman Hunt

from a photograph by W. A Mansell and Co., London

"I see the man toiling along in the hot sun, at times in the cold wind, going long stages, hungry often and footsore, drinking at the spring, eating by the way, His rough and patched clothes bedraggled with dirt, imparting to others blessings which no human power was strong enough to give to Him."

One would have liked to introduce Carlyle to Rembrandt's magnificently human treatment of the Bible themes.

It was at this time that poor Deverell, the gay, handsome youth, fell ill. His father and mother had died, the support of the family had fallen on his shoulders when he was struck down by a fell disease. Millais was in Scotland, but Hunt wrote him, and together they bought a picture for ninety guineas, which did something to render things easier for the sick man.

But Hunt was now hankering to go to the Holy Land. For long he had had the idea. At one time Millais wished to go with him, but he changed his mind, while Hunt's determination grew stronger and stronger.

Agnew, the dealer, came and offered him

£500 for the first figure painting he made in the East, but Hunt, much to his astonishment, declined to be tied in any way, and refused the commission. He had, however, for the first time been able to accumulate some little money, and he devoted it to carrying out this dearest ambition.

A friend, Thomas Seddon, an amateur, wished to join him as a pupil, and elected to go ahead to Cairo. Madox Brown said he would have come too had he not been a married man.

At last he is ready. Millais helps him to pack, sees him into the train, throws in some food from the buffet as the carriage moves out —there was no time for dinner—and he is gone.

On 14th January 1854 he was in Paris. From there he went by train to Chalons, then by boat down the Rhone to Marseilles, joining there the P. & O. steamer for Alexandria.

He met Seddon at Cairo: "A happy holiday feeling in the air; it was to me as the slaking of a long thirst."

He was soon hard at work. He did not wish

to paint contemporary life but to try to reconstruct the past. Soon we find him camped out with Seddon near the Sphinx. But they have their troubles. Their tent is blown away and they have an empty tomb swept and garnished for their accommodation. Later they take a dahabeeyah, and sail down the Nile. "Seddon is invaluable as a manager of business matter," Hunt writes home, and Seddon on his part has something amusing to say. "Poor Hunt is half bothered out of his life here in painting figures; but between ourselves I think he is rather exigeant in expecting Arabs and Turks in this climate to stand still for six or eight hours. Don't tell anyone this, not even Rossetti."

He reaches Jerusalem early in 1854. Though the immemorial East changes very slowly, yet things were in a much more primitive state seventy years ago than to-day, when you buy your ticket at Cook's and find everywhere a beaten track.

Hunt had a strenuous time. At Siloam he was assaulted by the Sheik and his followers, and had to defend himself with his fists, and

threaten them with a useless revolver—it was jammed. However, he came out on top and haled the offending Sheik before the Consul, thereby acquiring much prestige in the neighbourhood.

He was soon busily engaged on the pictures "The Finding of Christ in the Temple" and "The Scapegoat." The latter was painted on the shores of the Dead Sea, a wild and desolate spot, haunted only by bands of wandering Bedouins, and the work was attended by no small degree of personal danger.

In 1856 after two years' absence—during which the Crimean War had run its course—the painter returned to England.

"The Scapegoat" was the only finished work he brought back and its reception was dubious. Gambart the dealer would have nothing to do with it. He wanted a religious picture, not a picture of an animal.

When it was hung on the line in the Academy of 1856, the public, too, were rather mystified. The picture illustrates an ancient Jewish rite. A goat was sacrificed to the Lord in the Temple while another, its head bound with a red fillet,

was dedicated to the spirit Azazel, and driven into the wilderness, with stones, and hootings, and execrations, there to perish miserably. Symbolically it is intended to represent the Saviour, despised and rejected, foredoomed to suffer for the sins of others.

In the presentment there is nothing to suggest the religious element except symbolically. It is a powerful and impressive rendering of the miserable animal, standing by the desolate sea, its feet breaking through the crust of salt on the top of the mud. Around is no vegetation, but the skull of an animal lies on the ground, and other bones are half submerged in the water. Behind is the rugged range of the mountains of Edom glowing red against the sky.

His own friends of course are enthusiastic in its praise. Ford Madox Brown writes:

"Hunt's 'Scapegoat' requires to be seen to be believed in. Only then can it be understood how by the might of genius out of an old goat and some saline incrustations, can be made one of the most tragic and impressive works in the annals of art."

The price of the picture was 450 guineas and

for a while it remained unsold. Sir Robert Peel offered £250 for it, explaining that he wished to use it as a pendant to a Landseer—he apparently thought that by treating it simply as an animal painting he was entitled to a reduction of £200. However, it found a purchaser just before the close of the Exhibition. At Christie's, however, on the 22nd June 1923, the picture fetched the large sum of 4600 guineas.

It was at this time that Hunt offered himself as a candidate for the Associateship of the Royal Academy, but he only received one vote. Since that time he remained more or less aloof from the Academy, exhibiting no pictures there until 1860, and only eight works between 1860 and 1874, and none after that time. When at a later date Millais urged him to stand, assuring him that he would guarantee his election, and holding out the advantages of participation in the Chantrey Bequest Fund purchases as a bait (rather a commentary on the view the Academicians took of the proper uses of that fund), Hunt was firm and preferred to remain outside. In 1863 he gave evi-

dence before a Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the management of the Royal Academy and criticised its methods severely.

It was not until four years later, in 1860, that he was able to complete his other picture started in the Holy Land, "Christ in the Temple." Hunt had spent his capital on his travels, had made comparatively little since he came back, and was very much hampered by money difficulties, when his old friend, Mr Combe of Oxford, came and strongly advised him, instead of wasting his time trying to produce pot-boilers, to borrow £300 and finish the "Temple" picture. When the artist said that that was all very well, but where was the bank that would advance the money on an uncompleted picture, Combe produced the money there and then and insisted on his using it.

And so at last the picture was finished. But so much capital had been spent in the production of the picture, so much effort had been expended on it, that Hunt determined that he must obtain for it a very different price from what he had hitherto been content to accept. He was of the opinion that if the

picture were exhibited privately and admission charged, and if it were also engraved, that the ultimate profit would justify this increased price. The price he fixed at 5500 guineas, an unheard-of sum in those days for a modern work.

His friend, Wilkie Collins, talking it over with him, suggested his going to consult with Charles Dickens, "not only a man of genius, but a good business man," and seeing if he could not suggest some plan, by which the requisite sum could be obtained.

It was ten years now since Dickens had made the onslaught on the P.R.B.'s in *Household Words*, and Hunt had met him recently and was on perfectly good terms with him, but he rather hesitated about asking such a favour from one whom he had no reason to suppose was particularly in sympathy with his art.

However, Collins spoke to Dickens, who shortly after wrote, asking the painter to come and see him. After a discussion he suggested the following arrangement: a total price of 5500 guineas, of which £1500 should be paid down, £1000 in six months and the remainder spread over a period of two and a half or three

years. After some trouble Hunt succeeded in getting Gambart to accede to these terms.

The exhibition of the picture at Gambart's Gallery was a great success, the attendance reaching to 800 and 1000 a day, and now at last after his years of strenuous labour the painter had achieved well-merited success. From this time on he was received with honour in the highest circles; and while the reverse of a Society man, was on intimate terms with many of the most prominent men of the day.

In 1865 he married, and in the August of 1866 set off with his wife for a second visit to the East. An outbreak of cholera, however, caused him to change his plans and they proceeded from Marseilles to Italy, settling in Florence. In December of that year his wife died in Florence, leaving behind her a little boy, who was taken charge of by his friend, Spencer Stanhope and his wife, who were in Florence at the time. Finding in work his only solace, Hunt at once set to on a new picture, "Isabella and the Pot of Basil." He remained in Florence till next year, when he returned to England with his little son.

The next two years were uneventful but in 1869 he set out once more for the East, spending some time in Italy on the way.

Soon we find him back again in Jerusalem after an absence of fourteen years: "To walk up and down in the cool and glory that at last I had got back to work in the East brought peace to my soul."

Strangely enough the cloud of war fell over Europe just as it had done during his former visit. On the first occasion it was the Crimean War, this time it was the Franco-German War, while his third visit saw the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War in 1877.

Intending to make a stay of a considerable time he took a house for a term of three years, and was soon engaged on his picture "The Shadow of the Cross." Christ is represented as a young man working as a carpenter ("Is not this the carpenter?" Mark vi. 3). The end of the day has come, and He stretches His wearied limbs. As His mother looks up from the chest in front of which she is kneeling, she sees thrown on the wall by the horizontal rays of the setting sun His shadow, which as-

sumes the prophetic shape of a figure nailed on a cross.

The studio was made on the roof, with a movable hut, there to get the horizontal rays of the rising and the setting sun, for the house was one of the highest in the city, with an almost uninterrupted sweep of horizon. A second little hut sheltered the painter and his canvas.

In 1871 he returned via France, having previously dispatched the picture from Jaffa via Gibraltar.

He had now an established reputation and had little difficulty in disposing of the picture to Messrs Agnew for £5500 down, and a similar sum by instalments at later dates.

The picture was exhibited first in London, then in the provinces, and created a great sensation. The Queen desired to have it sent to Buckingham Palace for her inspection, and asked the painter to make her a smaller replica of the head of the Saviour. It is interesting to note that the French painter Tissot, seeing the work, was by it induced to go to the East, and paint on the same system.

In 1875 Hunt married again, the sister of his deceased wife, the marriage taking place in Neuchatel, and taking her with him made his third visit to Palestine. Arrived at Jerusalem he found that his former house was in a ruinous condition, and having suffered a great deal of inconvenience on previous occasions from the lack of a proper studio, he determined to have a house built for himself.

When this was sufficiently far advanced he set to work on a subject for which the first sketch had been made on the previous visit: "The Triumph of the Innocents."

Unfortunately, owing to a delay at the last minute, the large supply of materials which the artist had provided for his work had been left behind to be sent direct to Jaffa by sea. They were late in arriving, and after waiting impatiently for a considerable time, Hunt determined to see if he could obtain material in the bazaar that he could paint on. A strong linen was found, and on it he painted as an experiment the small picture "The Ship," now in the Tate Gallery. But though stout enough for the small picture the linen tore at the edge

under the greater tension required for the larger size, and therefore could not be tightly enough stretched, a circumstance which was the source of a great deal of future trouble. However, the painter was enabled to start his work, and by the time the missing cases had arrived it was already too far advanced for him to be willing to sacrifice what he had already done. As time went on, however, the wrinkling of the surface gave more and more trouble, and the painter, after two and a half years' absence, returned to England with the two principal figures still unfinished.

It is interesting to note that on this visit he made the acquaintance of Lieut. Kitchener of the Royal Engineers, then engaged in his survey of Palestine.

Back in London his troubles with the picture were not over—it was backed with stout canvas but still the corrugations refused to disappear. Months and years passed. Finally the painter set it aside altogether and began the subject afresh on a somewhat larger scale. After this version was finished, the defective portion in the first was cut bodily out and re-

placed with a piece of sound canvas, and it too was carried to completion.

The larger version now hangs in the National Gallery, the smaller (and original version) in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

In this picture Holman Hunt carries to the greatest extreme his system of religious symbolism. Perhaps the following summary of its meaning condensed from the painter's own analysis, published in the Appendix of his book, will be of interest.

The Holy Family are represented fleeing from Bethlehem towards Gaza; they have come down from the high ground of the mountains into the more fertile plain. It is a moonlight night, and in the distance are signal fires, still lighted in Syria in times of trouble. Mary is seated on a she-ass, which, as is still the custom in the East, is followed by her foal. Joseph walks in front, leading the ass, and anxiously scanning the horizon for signs of the soldiers of Herod. Mary still wears her bridal robe (it was the custom for brides to do so till it was worn out), and she is dressing the infant Christ, full of joy at His safety.

Around are groups of little cherubs, only visible to the Christ Child, who holds out His hand to them, the souls of the innocent babes that have been massacred by Herod's men. They have now entered the ranks of the saints and martyrs, and their bodies show no wounds.

Joseph steps across a little stream, supplied by the irrigation water-wheel. In contrast with this earthly stream, are the "living waters," ever rolling onward and breaking, trodden by the feet of the babes. In the globes or bubbles are scenes from the Bible story. "Jacob's Ladder" is seen in one. Heaven is indicated by the Adoration of the Lamb in another.

In 1881 the painter bought a house at Fulham; he is now a successful painter, and his life becomes less eventful.

Of his later works two of the most interesting are "The Lady of Shalott," based on the old illustration in the *Tennyson* volume of 1857, and the well-known "May Morning on Magdalen Tower," which was exhibited in 1891.

In 1892 Hunt and his wife again visited the East, visiting Cairo, sailing up the Nile as far

as Philae, and finally going on to Jerusalem. But he bemoans the changes time has wrought. Cairo he hardly recognises as the same Cairo he had known. When he first saw Jerusalem in 1854, it was a city "compactly built together"; no house outside the walls, now the whole plateau was covered with unsightly buildings.

During this visit he made the sketches for his picture "The Miracle of the Sacred Fire," exhibited at the New Gallery in 1899.

When in 1905 he published his history of the Pre-Raphaelite Movement, all the others—Millais, Rossetti, Ford Madox Brown—had passed away.

He died five years later, in 1910. Until his death he adhered to his decision to keep aloof from the Royal Academy, but he was not without official recognition. The University of Oxford conferred on him the degree of D.C.L., and on the death of G. F. Watts he was made a member of the Victorian Order.

Holman Hunt's chief claim to distinction is that he embodies in art, as no other painter

TRIUMPH OF THE INNOCENCE

National Gallery [illegible]

has done, the typical religious sentiment of his age. Whatever the critic may say, there is no doubt as to the popular response to such works as "The Light of the World," "The Finding of Christ in the Temple," "The Shadow of the Cross" and the "Triumph of the Innocents." They are to the Victorian era what Dürer's engravings, illustrating the Bible story, were to his times. With Dürer he had much in common. There was the same extreme conscientiousness. Though he could not compare with Dürer—one of the supreme draughtsmen of the world—as a craftsman, yet in his work there was much of the same concentration on the expression of the actual fact, the aiming at truth and letting beauty take care of itself. Indeed in both there was a certain insensitiveness, a lack of response to beauty in all but its most austere forms.

No man had a higher ideal of what his work should be. He was instinctively the moral teacher. It was a curious fate that linked him with Rossetti in his early days, the one essentially Teutonic, the other Latin.

He was essentially the man with a message: he came into the world to deliver it. He turned neither to the right hand nor the left but delivered his message, and after a period of neglect the world agreed to receive it.

Millais and he had been sworn friends in their youth, and when they drifted apart there was no loss of friendship.

Late in life the two had an argument: Millais, the successful man of the world, Hunt, successful too, but wresting his success from the world in spite of itself.

Said Millais: "A man must adapt himself to the temper of his time." Said Hunt: "There must be reasonable limits." Millais: "You are too unbending to the world. What good is recognition when you are dead and gone? I want it here and now. I paint what is wanted. There is a fashion now for little girls in mob caps. I satisfy it! When they tire of that I am willing to give them something fresh. Take my advice, old boy, and take the world as it is, and don't make it your business to rub up people the wrong way."

So spoke Mr Worldly-Wise-Man, but Holman Hunt never could take his advice.

He does not command our love as Millais, with his generous impulses and all his petty faults, or Rossetti, with his extraordinary charm of personality and his uncanny enchantment do, but he earns our undying respect. Here, we feel, is a sterling, honest man, a fine artist, and a thorough gentleman.

CHAPTER FIVE

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

CHAPTER FIVE DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

WHEN THE LITTLE BAND OF THE PRE-Raphaelite Brethren forced themselves on public notice in 1849, one more than all the others was the moving spirit—Dante Gabriel Rossetti. It was not that he produced the most striking work, though the little he did had its own indefinable quality. He was not the originator of the movement, and he was the first to break away, but during the inception of the Brotherhood, it was he who supplied the vital spark. The ideas were those of others, but it was his infectious enthusiasm that turned them into something dynamic. He set the ball a-rolling and kept it moving until its own momentum carried it along.

In many ways Rossetti is one of the most remarkable figures of the nineteenth century. Almost equally renowned as a poet and a painter, in each art failing to reach the heights attained by the greatest, surpassed perhaps by others of lesser gifts, and yet communicating the indefinable spark of genius even to his slightest work, everything he does, whether

in pictorial art or in literature, bears the impress of a very striking personality.

When a boy in his teens he made translations from the early Italian poets, which are part of the inheritance of English literature. His earliest paintings, in spite of their faults of inexperience, have qualities which in some ways are finer than those of any others of the group.

He comes like a denizen from the south into this cold northern clime of ours. His gusts of southern passion seem strange on our open hill-sides. Like the wind that bloweth where it listeth, his force sometimes expends itself in seeming futility, yet wherever he goes he rouses strange enthusiasms, new life springs up in dead arts, and when he passes by the impetus has been given and the work is continued by other hands.

He was of Italian origin. His father Gabriel Rossetti, was a man of letters, and custodian of ancient bronzes in the Museo Barbonico of Naples. During the dynastic strife that troubled Italy in the beginning of the century, he was the writer of a number of patriotic

and inflammatory lays, and he was forced to flee from the country, being helped in his escape to Malta by the officers of a British man-of-war. Finding Malta none too safe he came to England, and settled in London, earning a modest income by teaching Italian. His mother, Frances Mary Lavinia Polidori, was the daughter of another Italian resident in London, Gaetano Polidori, who had married an English wife. The atmosphere of the house in London was entirely Italian (though Gabriel Rossetti said quaintly that he had to buy his sunshine at the coal merchants) and the meeting-ground of many Italian refugees, and much of Rossetti's youth was passed amid the accompaniment of violent political discussions.

The family were four: Maria Francesca, the eldest—she entered a religious establishment and died in 1876; Dante Gabriel, William Michael and Christina Georgina. Both the two last had earned literary distinction: William Michael as a critic, and especially as the more or less official historian of the P.R.B. movement; Christina as a poetess—unsurpassed in our language.

Gabriel Charles Dante Rossetti (as his full name was) was born on 12th May 1828. As a boy he went to King's College School, where a very great English artist, John Sell Cotman, was teacher of drawing. But perhaps because landscape art never seemed to make any special appeal to Rossetti, (even to the natural beauty of outdoor Nature he seemed in after life strangely indifferent, and was as confirmed a townsman as Dr Johnson), it does not appear that Cotman affected him in any way. But he had a childish facility for drawing. There is a story of the visiting milkman amazed at "the boy making a picture" of his rocking-horse (the drawing is reproduced in Marillier's work on Rossetti), and from his earliest years it was an understood thing that Gabriel was to be a painter. He left school, July 1842, and spent four years at F. S. Cary's Drawing Academy in Bloomsbury Street.

In 1846 we find him a student at the Royal Academy: strikingly handsome, with dark hair, carelessly dressed, and with rather an imperious manner. Not in a sense a serious

student, he did not appear able to settle down to the commonplace drudgery of the study of anatomy and the drawing of the human figure, and in this respect he is curiously like Blake. But he has a natural gift for drawing, and his fanciful sketches are much in demand among the other students. He has, too, a ready flow of language, a witty tongue. Although a foreigner among English people, he has a dominating position among his fellow-students.

By this time, too, he has already written "The Blessed Damozel," "My Sister's Sleep," and other poems that still rank with his finest work.

Tiring of the routine of the Academy Schools he wrote Ford Madox Brown his impetuous letter, and for a while worked in his studio. But here he found he had only changed one form of drudgery for another, and though the friendship thus made continued to the end of his life, the lessons soon stopped.

When the P.R.B. was founded, mainly as the result of his infectious enthusiasm, he set to work along with the others to produce his first work under its auspices: "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin."

The painting was actually carried out in Holman Hunt's studio and under his supervision. In fact, Hunt, in his autobiography, seems to imply that in the early stages his part was not confined to advice merely, but that he actually assisted in the painting. Be that as it may, it is certainly the personality of Rossetti that pervades the picture, and though it has not the intensity of feeling of the beautiful "Annunciation" of the following year, yet it stands out as one of the most distinctive of all the P.R.B. works. The St Anne was painted from his own mother; his sister Christina sat for the Virgin. The great books were borrowed from his father's library, all in the approved P.R.B. way, but there is added a glamour that belongs to Rossetti alone.

In the Annunciation, the "Ecce Ancilla Domini" of the following year, we have one of the most distinctive works produced in the history of the Brotherhood. It is Rossetti's finest contribution to the movement, but it is curious how little of the real quality of the picture depends on the methods of the

P.R.B.'s. The figures are certainly painted direct from life. His own sister Christina is again the model for the Virgin; his friend Woolner for the angel. The detail is carefully painted, and the handling has more assurance than the painting of the previous year, but compared with the work of either Millais or Hunt it is tentative and a little timid.

But where the painting stands absolutely by itself is in its intense emotional significance. Millais can fascinate us by his brilliant revelations of natural beauty—Nature's forms and Nature's most glowing colours selected and harmonised with extraordinary skill; Ford Madox Brown can tell a moving story pictorially with great force; Holman Hunt can preach a powerful sermon; but Rossetti takes us by the hand (like Love leading Dante in his great picture), and we feel that we are treading on holy ground. The crouching awestruck figure on the bed waking to the knowledge of her great mission is touchingly human, the treatment is quite unconventional, yet there is a loftiness, a hushed solemnity about the little

picture, which places it on a level with the masterpieces of early Italian art.

There is little colour in the picture. It is a symphony in white before the days of Whistler. The white-washed cell, the white-robed figures, the white bed, and then by contrast the patch of clear blue sky through the window, a deeper blue in the curtain at the bed's head, a touch of crimson on the missal in the foreground.

As we have already seen, the picture was not sent to the Academy, but to the Free Exhibition, where it shared in the abuse heaped on the heads of the P.R.B.'s.

The *Athenæum* refers to "such puerilities as the one before us, which with the affectation of having done a great thing is weakness itself. An unintelligent imitation of the mere technicalities of old art—golden glories, fanciful scribblings on the frames and other infantine absurdities—constitute all its claims," and other papers are even more hearty in their abuse.

Rossetti takes the reverse rather badly. One might say he sulks. He declares that never again will he exhibit his work in public, and

to this decision he practically adheres throughout life. But one cannot say that he plays a very manly part or gives his associates the backing they are entitled to.

The picture remains unsold till he calls it the "Blessed White Eyesore," till finally it finds a purchaser at the sum of £80.

It now hangs in the National Gallery, one of the most valued of all the works of the P.R.B.'s.

From this time he begins to withdraw more and more from active connection with the Brotherhood, but in his own entirely erratic and unmethodical way he is far from idle.

His first two pictures had been in oil; now we find him making a series of studies in water-colour. The Dante legend begins to fascinate him—it is noticeable that he has dropped the Charles from his name, and though he is known to all his intimates as Gabriel, has placed the Dante first. And so we have the wonderful drawings of "Dante and Beatrice"; "The Salutation"; "Dante Meeting Beatrice in Eden"; "Dante's Dream" (an early water-colour version of the large painting in oil in

the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool). In these the haunting melancholy of the poetry speaks again in pictorial form, wedded to jewel-like colour. But the colour is very different from the clear brilliant tones of young Millais, or the harsher and more garish hues of Holman Hunt and Madox Brown.

Here we have strange exotic harmonies; the juxtaposition of unexpected colours—emerald green and sapphire blue, and soft rich reds and purple, with passages of clear cool grey.

It is this absolutely personal quality that marks his work off from that of all his contemporaries. He uses colour not by the laws of the text-books, or on the lines of approved custom, but as a language of his own. His works more than most lose in translation into black and white.

His use of the water-colour medium is also quite unorthodox. It is not applied in the flat washes of the early landscape masters at the beginning of the century—the staining of the white paper with transparent colour, which gives their work its distinctive charm. One

ANNUNCIATION

National Gallery R[illegible]

might almost say he turns water-colour into a form of tempera painting, the paint used thickly, and apparently mixed with gum or glue, and applied in small niggling touches : a false use of the medium perhaps, and leading to disastrous results in the hands of unintelligent imitators, but giving greater solidity to the figures than the transparent method, and in his hands yielding results of great beauty.

In addition to the Dante themes we now find his interest turning in another direction. There was a wave of mediævalism in the air. Scott at the beginning of the century had revived the interest in our old ballad literature ; Tennyson in 1832 had published his "Lady of Shalott," and ten years later his "Morte d'Arthur" and "Sir Galahad."

And so we have the beginnings of these curious, crowded little compositions—cramped into small space like an illuminator's page, glowing with strange, rich colour like stained glass, and illustrating themes of chivalry.

Madox Brown tells how, in 1856, Millais and Rossetti have now drifted apart, and when he calls on the young Associate of the Academy,

and suggests that they should go together to see some of Rossetti's new water-colour drawings, "those lovely things," he calls them, Millais at first refuses, saying he thinks Gabriel doesn't want him to come, has shown him nothing for three years, and would prefer him to stay away. However, he is persuaded to go, and is wild with enthusiasm. "I never saw mortal man more delighted," says Madox Brown; "he kept returning from one to the other, and bursting into such raptures as only Millais can."

By this time, Miss Siddall, the beautiful milliner's assistant whom Rossetti first met in 1850, had entered closely into his life. Their engagement took place somewhere about the end of 1851, but the marriage, partly on account of her bad health, partly on account of Rossetti's precarious financial position, but probably chiefly owing to his procrastinating habits, was delayed for nearly ten years.

He had now taken rooms at 14 Chatham Place, Blackfriars Bridge, and at this time she was his chief model. Her head appears again and again in the Beatrice pictures. There are

drawers and drawers full of studies of "Guggum," which was his pet name for her.

She too developed artistic talent and produced water-colours in the style of Rossetti—indeed some of those which pass for his, may be copies from her hand. One of her most charming and individual works is the drawing in the Tate Gallery illustrating the old ballad of Sir Patrick Spens:

> "And lang, lang may the maidens sit,
> With their gowd kaims in their hair,
> A' waiting for their ain dear loves!
> For them they'll see nae mair."

Ruskin at this time proves himself a very valuable friend to the young painter. A generous arrangement is entered into by which he buys his work up to a certain annual sum, at the rate of prices he would obtain from other purchasers, Rossetti always first submitting the work to him before offering it elsewhere. The arrangement lasted for several years and at this time, when the artist was gradually developing his own personal outlook, was of infinite service to him. Ruskin also makes the acquaintance of Miss Siddall, whose personality fascinates him, and whose work he

also purchases. Unfortunately, her health is now in a very precarious state. It is due to Ruskin's generosity that she is able to visit the various health resorts to which she goes during the next few years.

An amusing little sidelight is thrown by a passage in Madox Brown's diary, on the relations of Rossetti and Miss Siddall.

The latter has been visiting the Madox Browns at Finchley; she and Emma are bosom friends, and when Brown comes back at night he finds that Gabriel has been very rude to Emma—wouldn't speak to her, either to say, "How do you do?" or "Good-bye," the reason being from "some freak or notion in his head that Emma sets Miss Siddall against him." Then we have the illuminating comment that this is really absurd, "for poor Miss Sid. complains enough of his absurd goings on not to require that sort of thing."

However, Brown feels that he must put his foot down, and writes demanding an explanation. An ample apology follows, and for weeks Gabriel keeps trying to do him little

good turns, sending along a customer and so on, to make up for his boorishness.

Another entry a little later shows that peace reigns also between Gabriel and Miss Siddall.

"Supped at 'Guggums.' Gabriel has given three guineas for a superb Indian opera cloak, and they are for the 'Princess's' to sport her and it on Saturday."

We have come then to an end of the first phase of Rossetti's art life.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood is a thing of the past. With it has gone the first flush and glamour of youth. To it belong some of his most exquisite works: in pictures, "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin" and the "Ecce Ancilla Domini," which stand alone among his works in their sweetness, purity and simplicity. In poetry, "The Blessed Damozel," "Jenny," and the *Translations from the Italian Poets.*

Perhaps one might say that it is in the literary medium that the artist speaks most surely and clearly, though it is interesting to note how strong the pictorial element is in

his poetry—how direct an appeal is made to the eye as well as to the ear.

The following passage from "A Last Confession," written about 1848, is extraordinary in the vividness of its presentment of a visual impression :

"I know last night
I dreamed I saw into the garden of God,
Where women walked whose painted images
I have seen with candles round them in the church.
They bent this way and that, one to another,
Playing ; and over the long golden hair
Of each there floated like a ring of fire
Which when she stooped stooped with her, and when she rose
Rose with her. Then a breeze flew in among them,
As if a window had been opened in heaven
For God to give His blessing from, before
This world of ours should set (for in my dream
I thought our world was setting, and the sun
Flared a spent taper) ; and beneath that gust
The rings of light quivered like forest leaves."

Not that the appeal of his poetry is entirely to the eye. On the contrary it is distinguished by a rhythmic music at once richer and more subtle in its cadences than we find in most English poetry. Strangely enough to music itself he was not merely indifferent, he actually disliked it, though from the testimony of many hearers his speaking voice was extremely

musical in quality, and his reading of his own poems of wonderful beauty.

We now find him entering on a new phase, which in its turn results in the creation of a new movement, which we might term the Gothic Revival, a movement often confounded with the Pre-Raphaelite movement, but quite distinct from it, and which even at the end of the century had not completely run its course.

In 1856 a young Oxford undergraduate, Edward Burne-Jones, came to him for advice in matters of art, just as he himself had gone to Madox Brown eight years before. The orthodox treatment in such cases—and doubtless the safest—is to discourage the aspirant as much as possible; to tell him to go into a bank, into a shop, or into a factory, but if he wishes to earn a living, not to paint.

But Rossetti was not orthodox. He saw in the young man talent far above the ordinary, and the result of his advice was that Burne-Jones gave up his idea of entering the Church, and took up seriously the pursuit of art. It was he who shortly afterwards introduced to

Rossetti another young Oxford undergraduate, William Morris.

The association of the three was destined to be as fruitful as the formation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1848. In this case, as in the previous one, Rossetti was not the originator, the suggestion came to him from the outside, but, as before, once his interest was aroused, his infectious enthusiasm carried everything before it. In this case the form the movement took was the study of the wealth of legendary lore which forms a mystic background to the beginnings of our history—tales of chivalry interwoven with mystic legends of the Holy Grail. We have seen how Tennyson had already touched on the subject, and before coming to Oxford, drawing his inspiration probably from Tennyson, Rossetti had painted his "Arthur's Tomb," but from William Morris he receives a new impulse and plunges into the study of Malory's "Morte d'Arthur."

He had visited Oxford before in 1855, and Woodward, the architect, had asked him to do some designing for the Oxford Museum

which was then being built. The project came to nothing, but in 1857 Woodward was engaged on the Oxford Union, and the little group, Rossetti, Morris, and Burne-Jones, were invited to decorate with paintings the walls of the Debating Hall of the Society.

Rossetti's part was the painting of two panels: "Sir Launcelot before the Shrine of the Sangrail," and "Sir Galahad Receiving the Sangrail."

The work was embarked on at the beginning of the Long Vacation with tremendous enthusiasm. They gave their work free, but all costs, including the travelling expenses of the non-residents, were borne by the Union, and the bill that was run up was probably considerably more than would have been paid for the work on the basis of an ordinary commission. Madox Brown remarks that he saw Rossetti upset a pot of priceless real ultramarine from the scaffolding with the careless remark: "Oh, we often do that."

Unfortunately none of the group had any experience of the technique of wall painting. The rough wall surface was merely white-

washed, and on this the designs were painted in distemper. In a few months the colour began to flake off, and soon the works had almost completely perished.

Of Rossetti's work all the record we have is a series of exquisite drawings. One particularly beautiful composition shows Guinevere, with arms outstretched, leaning against an apple-tree, looking down on the sleeping Launcelot. The figure, evidently drawn from Miss Siddall, has a wonderfully lissom grace, seductive, like Eve with the apple in her hand, and yet in a curious, haunting way recalling the attitude of Christ on the Cross.

Another interesting event during his stay in Oxford at this time is his introduction to Miss Burden—afterwards Mrs Morris—whose dark and fateful beauty fascinated him, and appears in so many of his later pictures.

About 1856 also Rossetti, along with Millais, Hunt, Mulready and other artists, was asked to contribute some illustrations to Moxon's forthcoming edition of Tennyson's poems. Several of his designs are of great beauty, but Rossetti had not had sufficient experience

in designing for the wood engraver, and found the limitations imposed on him irksome. The modern photographic block would have reproduced the quality of his work better than the clean hard line of the old woodcut. In a letter to Wm. Bell Scott he writes: "I have designed five blocks for Tennyson, some of which are still cutting and maiming. It is a thankless task. After a fortnight's work, my block goes to the engraver, like Agag delicately, and is hewn in pieces before the Lord Harry.

"*Address to the Dalziel Bros.:*

"Oh woodman, spare that block,
Oh gash not anyhow,
It took ten days by clock,
I'd fain protect it now.

Chorus. Wild laughter from Dalziel's workshop."

Though nothing remains now of the Oxford Union decorations the association thus begun was destined to continue for a number of years. Rossetti was now the head of a little group, including Arthur Hughes, Stanhope, Val Prinsep, in addition to Morris and Burne-Jones. Morris, in especial, was turning his

attention particularly to "applied art," as apart from picture-making.

In 1860 the firm of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. came into existence. As in the case of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood the original members were seven: Morris, Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Philip Webb, an architect, Peter Paul Marshall, an engineer and amateur painter, and Charles Faulkner, a mathematician, who took no active part, though like the rest he contributed part of the capital. William Morris was the managing director.

An old house was taken in Red Lion Square, and for a number of years Rossetti was connected with the business. The chief designs supplied by him were a series for stained glass—a two-light window with figures of Adam and Eve, from his design, being in St Martin's, Scarborough.

Miss Siddall's continued ill-health had meantime been a source of great anxiety to Rossetti—several times her life had been despaired of. In the spring of 1860 their long postponed marriage was decided on.

The letter he writes to his mother on the subject reveals him in a new and serious mood:

"I write you this word to say that Lizzie and I are going to be married at last, in as few days as possible. . . .

"Like all the important things I ever meant to do—to fulfil duty or secure happiness—this one has been deferred almost beyond possibility. I have hardly deserved that Lizzie should still consent to it, but she has done so, and I trust I may still have time to prove my thankfulness to her. The constantly failing state of her health is a terrible anxiety indeed; but I must still hope for the best, and am at any rate at this moment in a better position to take the step as regards money prospects than I have ever been before."

After a short time spent in France they return and take up their residence at Chatham Place.

The marriage appears in every way, apart from Mrs Rossetti's ill-health, to have been a happy one. Rossetti's bachelor-like Bohemian ways—his hours were very irregular, and he went out for a meal when he was inclined—she was quite accustomed to, and as she was not by any means a domesticated type of

woman, they perhaps fitted in with her own inclination.

An interesting event of the year 1861 was the publication of the first volume of Rossetti's poetical works—his translations of the early Italian poets, written between his eighteenth and twenty-second year. It was owing to the generosity of his friend, Ruskin, who gave the publishers a guarantee of £100, that the publication was rendered possible. The reception of the poems was highly gratifying, and the sales were considerable, all expenses being paid and a profit of £9 remaining for the author. Not a high rate of remuneration certainly, but after all a more satisfactory result than usually attends the publication of a first book of poems.

In May 1861, Mrs Rossetti gave birth to a still-born child, and her health became even more precarious than before. She was subject to a painful form of neuralgia, to combat which laudanum was prescribed.

One evening in February 1862, the two had dined together at a restaurant, and Rossetti after seeing her home had gone on to the Working Men's Club. On his return he

found her unconscious, having taken an overdose of laudanum, and though medical assistance was speedily obtained, all attempts to restore her proved fruitless.

Her death was a terrible blow to Rossetti, and it was some time before he took up again the threads of his work. Encouraged by the success of the publication of his *Translations from the Italian Poets*, he had for some months been getting together a collection of his original poems with a view to their publication. Now in a fit of remorse he placed the manuscript in her coffin: "I have often been writing at these poems when Lizzie was ill and suffering, and I might have been attending to her, and now they shall go," he said, when his friends remonstrated with him, and so the sacrifice was permitted, and the poems were buried with her.

The rooms at Chatham Place were too full of painful memories for him to wish to remain there, and after a short stay with his family, Rossetti took the rambling old house with a large garden in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, which he occupied until his death in 1882.

At first George Meredith and Algernon Charles Swinburne joined him, as his sub-tenants, Meredith remaining about two years, Swinburne considerably longer.

After the first shock of his bereavement had passed, he settled down to work, and now we find a change in his methods. Instead of the series of small water-colour studies, we find larger pictures in oil. Years of assiduous practice have now made good many of the defects of the earlier work, and to the next ten years (1862-1872) belong Rossetti's most important paintings.

From this time also he began to earn steadily an income amply sufficient for his needs, and we find that his private tastes, and his private whims and fancies, begin to have full sway. His large garden, over an acre in extent, becomes a sort of private menagerie. Rabbits, dormice, hedgehogs, kangaroos, armadillos, wombats, wallabies, squirrels, marmots, a deer, a racoon, a laughing jackass, owls, peacocks, parakeets, parrots, chameleons, lizards, and salamanders were some of the inmates.

BEATA BEATRIX

Tate Gallery ROSSETTI

To Madox Brown's growing family it was indeed an enchanted garden. The boy Oliver was especially a favourite of Rossetti's, and to him he indites the characteristic nonsense verse :

> "There was a young rascal called Nolly,
> Whose habits though dirty were jolly,
> And when this book comes
> To be marked by his thumbs,
> You may know that its owner is Nolly."

The interior of the house he begins to furnish in his own way. He ransacks London for old oak and mahogany furniture. Along with Whistler, whose acquaintance he has made, he is one of the first to acquire Japanese prints, and blue and white china. He pays no less than £120 for a pair of "hawthorn" vases.

Of his pictures of this period the most famous is his "Beata Beatrix," painted in memory of his wife. Here he draws closer than ever the implied parallel between himself and the early Italian poet, and to the imaginary Beatrice he gives the features of his own wife. His own description is as follows: "The picture illustrates the *Vita Nuova*,

embodying symbolically the death of Beatrice as treated in that work. The picture is not intended at all to represent death, but to render it under the semblance of a trance, in which Beatrice, seated at a balcony overlooking the city, is suddenly rapt from earth to Heaven."

The picture was begun in 1863, though not finished till considerably later. In its translation of deep emotion into the language of form and colour, it marks a new achievement in art.

Another outstanding work of this period, perhaps his finest achievement in painting in oil, is the picture known as "The Beloved," or "The Bride." It was commissioned by Mr George Rae in 1863 and completed in 1866. It illustrates the verse in the Song of Solomon: "She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework; the virgins that be her fellows shall bear her company and shall be brought unto thee," and shows in the centre the fair face of the bride surrounded by the clustered heads of her darker hand-maidens. In the foreground is a little negro boy with a bowl of roses.

The work, along with many other fine examples, remained after her husband's death in the possession of Mrs Rae until her death in 1916, when on the disposal of the collection it was purchased, along with several other fine examples, through the National Art Collections Fund, and now hangs in the Tate Gallery.

Another fine work from the same source also in the Tate Gallery is the "Monna Vanna," a gorgeous study in white and gold, dating from the year 1866.

In these works, life-size studies of female types, we have portrayed a more mundane type of beauty, full of sensuous languor, and characterised by rich and glowing colour, differing widely from the romantic and jewel-like water-colours of the previous decade.

In 1865 it is interesting to note that Rossetti takes up poetry again, producing a number of sonnets to accompany his pictures and also the sonnets entitled "Willow-wood."

In 1866 he began to fall into ill-health; insomnia followed in 1867, and he was also threatened with serious eyesight trouble. It was at this time that the sinister influence

which clouded the later years of his life first appears. During one of his bouts of insomnia a friend, in all good faith, advised him to try chloral, a drug the effects of which were then little known, telling him it was quite harmless. The habit thus acquired was never shaken off until just at the end of his life, and its pernicious influences continually sapped his powers, mental, physical, and moral.

However, in 1868 a visit to Penkill Castle in Ayrshire, along with his old friend, William Bell Scott, helped to restore him to health, a visit repeated in the following year. While at Penkill he began to devote himself again seriously to poetry. He began there a poem "The Stream's Secret." The title was that of a poem which his friend Scott was engaged on, but Rossetti appropriated it, and not all Scott's expostulations would induce him to give it up. The ill-feeling engendered by such little episodes appears very plainly in the volumes of Scott's Autobiography.

In 1869 he revived the project Rossetti had formerly entertained of publishing his early poems. Some he had rewritten from memory,

of others, among them one of his most important early poems, "Jenny," the only record had been buried in his wife's grave. Yielding at last to the advice of his friends, he had the manuscript disinterred, and the volume of poems was issued in 1870.

The poems were received with a general chorus of praise until late in 1871, when Mr Robert Buchanan, under an assumed name, published an article in the *Contemporary Review*, under the heading: "The Fleshy School of Poetry," in which he violently attacked them on moral grounds.

The effect of this criticism on Rossetti was out of all proportion to its importance. At first, indeed, he contented himself with a moderate and dignified reply in the *Athenæum* entitled "The Stealthy School of Criticism," but on the republication of an enlarged form of the article in the form of a pamphlet in 1872, he seemed to lose all sense of proportion. Perhaps the evil effects of chloral were partly responsible, but for a short time his mind appeared almost unhinged. He imagined himself the object of general obloquy, and saw a uni-

versal conspiracy directed against him under the most innocent guises. Even in the "Hunting of the Snark" by his friend, Lewis Carroll, he detected a veiled insult. This period of mental strain culminated in an attempt at suicide, fortunately unsuccessful, and it was some time before his mind recovered its normal tone and he was able again to take up his interrupted work. But the evil had been done, the chloral habit was now thoroughly riveted on him and these later years are passed more and more under a cloud. The marvel is that during the last ten years of his life he was able to produce so large a quantity of work of such high quality.

In 1871 we find him with William Morris at his house, Kelmscote, near Lechlade, and during the next year or two he paints a number of pictures, in which Mrs Morris' face—her great dark eyes and heavy cloud of black hair—appear.

But afterwards he goes back to his house at Chelsea and becomes more and more a recluse. Old friends drop off—he has an unhappy knack of alienating them now. Just a little

circle—his own family, the faithful Madox Brown, and one or two others, remain.

But there are some new friends—Theodore Watts Dunton becomes an inmate of his house in 1873, and remains with him until his death. A younger group of poets are growing up—William Sharp, Philip Marston, O'Shaughnessy, whose attitude to Rossetti is one of hero-worship. "What a supreme man Rossetti is," says Marston; "why is he not some great exiled king, that we might give our lives in trying to restore him to his kingdom?"

Of these last ten years the chief pictorial results are the series: "Proserpine," "The Blessed Damozel," "Venus Astarte," and other similar works. In these, his former tendencies tend to become exaggerated: the swan-like neck, the curved lips, the large eyes; the colour has a heavy exotic quality, almost affecting one like incense.

The most important of all is the large oil version of "Dante's Dream," now in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, begun in 1869 and worked on at intervals afterwards. Though, perhaps, inferior in some ways to the exqui-

site water-colour version of the same subject painted in 1855, it is one of his most impressive works. It illustrates the passage in the *Vita Nuova*, when Dante has a vision in which he sees Beatrice dead. Here is the passage in his own translation :—

> "Then love spoke thus : Now all shall be made clear,
> Come and behold your lady where she lies.
> These idle phantasies.
> Then carried me to see my lady dead,
> And standing at her head
> Her ladies put a white veil over her ;
> And with her was such very humbleness
> That she appeared to say, 'I am at peace.'"

To these pictorial works were added during this last period a number of poems, "Rose Mary," "The White Ship," "The King's Tragedy," which for power and vigour rank with his finest work, though different in quality from the incomparable delicacy of some of his earlier poems. They were published under the title *Ballads and Sonnets*, in 1881.

After a period of gradually failing health Rossetti died at Birchington, near Margate, on 10th April 1882.

As poet and painter, Rossetti occupies a unique position in English art. Perhaps, as

DANTE'S DREAM

WALKER ART GALLERY, LIVERPOOL — ROSSETTI

reproduced by permission of the Corporation of Liverpool

he himself said, his real *métier* was poetry, and he certainly mastered the technique of the literary form more thoroughly than that of the pictorial. But yet when all is said and done, to express himself fully he required both mediums. Much that he said in his verse could have been said in no other way; and the same is true of his pictures. In particular, he used colour in a way entirely his own. He made of it his own language, expressing unerringly his own precise quality of thought and emotion. And in both his pictures and his poetry he gives us more than any other painter of his time a personal vision.

Both as a painter and as a poet he is outstripped by other artists more accomplished—dealing with bigger themes, and painting on a larger canvas; handling their matter with larger resources and rising to greater heights of achievement; but for a purely personal message, delivered in a purely personal way, Rossetti's work is unique. We cannot sum him up better than in the words of his lifelong friend, Madox Brown:

"But Gabriel was a genius!"

CHAPTER SIX

SIR EDWARD BURNE-JONES

CHAPTER SIX
SIR EDWARD BURNE-JONES

WITH BURNE-JONES WE PASS TO THE second phase of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, or rather to what we should more correctly call the Gothic Revival.

In fact the two stand out as quite apart. The spade work of the pioneers has been done. Academic Art in England has received a violent jolt. It cannot settle down comfortably again into the old rut.

The P.R.B.'s have introduced bright vivid colour, a close searching detail; they have also brought forward the subject into almost undue prominence. Their formula has been swallowed eagerly (though not digested), by inferior practitioners, and in the next few years we shall find a copious output of obvious and shallow work in the same style.

But in the late fifties, taking the achievement of the P.R.B.'s as their starting point, and with Rossetti at their head, a new coterie work out an entirely fresh development. Oxford is their centre, and the other chief figures of the group are William Morris and Edward

Burne-Jones. Morris, of course, is the craftsman of the circle, and when, as it was wont to do, Rossetti's interest waned, it was he who became the centre of the group, and supplied the driving power.

But in Morris' case the issue is obscured by the linking up of his art with his socio-political views. A return to simple craftsmanship seemed to him to open up a gateway to the millennium.

And so he set himself to revive the old arts and crafts which flourished as adjuncts to the glories of Gothic architecture, and which carried beauty into the humblest walks of life. In a sense he failed, for alas! we cannot recreate the conditions of the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, with their mingled good and evil. In Conrad's words: "The appeal of an art which has passed away can never be repeated; it is as utterly gone out of the world as the song of a destroyed wild bird." We cannot touch the lives of the people by forming "peasants' art" societies, weaving expensive hand linens that can only be purchased by the rich. Still, when all is said and done, no one can gainsay the

fact that the efforts of Morris and his followers have resulted in a notable raising of the public standards of taste in applied art generally.

It is interesting to note that one wavelet of the movement was reserved for our own times. Morris in the Kelmscott Press had made printing once more a fine art, and his example had been followed by Cobden Sanderson and others. About twenty years ago a young Scotsman, Edward Johnston, took up the study of the beautiful old monkish script. With infinite pains he analysed it word by word, letter by letter, stroke by stroke. He worked out, in every detail, the methods followed, and in his fascinating book *Writing and Illuminating and Lettering*, illustrated so simply and beautifully by examples from his own pen, he creates for us afresh the long forgotten craft of the old scribe.

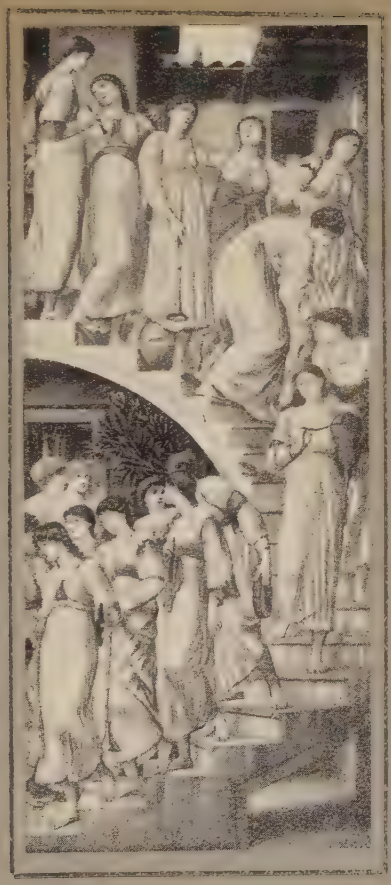
The sequel is encouraging. He was employed as a teacher in one of the chief art schools in London. Soon a little band of his pupils were spreading the use of the old methods far and wide. And to-day not only are they practised in the art schools of the country, but

even in the daily schools, and the present generation are being taught to write in a style at once more legible and more beautiful than that learned by their parents.

Edward Coley Burne-Jones was born in Birmingham in the year 1833. One fact he notes about his school-days: "I was so kept to the drawing of maps, that the earth has ever since lain beneath me." He was delicate as a boy, not strong enough to take part in the ordinary games of school life, but full of fun and continually up to merry pranks.

Curiously enough this side of his character does not find expression in his work. It is the melancholy of the Celt that is in evidence there, but among his friends and intimates he is loved for his whimsical fancy, and noted for his infectious laugh. "Ned Jones" he is to them all.

His art life begins when, as a young man, he finds himself at Oxford studying for the Church. Here he comes into contact with Morris, then also an undergraduate, and other kindred spirits. The Pre-Raphaelites have just been setting the official art world by the ears,



GOLDEN STAIRS

SIR E. BURNE-JONES

from a photograph by F. Hollyer London

and the young men are among their eager supporters. In Oxford is one of the early patrons of the movement, Mr Coombe, Director of the Oxford University Press, and his examples of Millais and Holman Hunt are available for their study. At the house of Mr Windus of Tottenham, he sees one of Madox Brown's finest works, the famous "Last of England."

In 1855 he and Morris and another friend, Fulford, spent a memorable holiday in France, visiting Amiens, Beauvais, Chartres and other famous monuments of Gothic architecture, coming home by Caudebec and Havre. Walking on the quay with Morris at Havre, he resolved to devote his life to art. "That," he says, "was the most memorable night of my life. We decided then that Morris should be an architect, and I a painter."

When they got back to Oxford he found a copy of Mallory's *Morte d'Arthur* in a bookshop. It fascinated him but was too expensive to buy, so he used to stand there and devour it in snatches, pacifying the bookseller by buying a cheap volume or two. However, Morris, who was more of a plutocrat than the others,

bought the book, in whose pages they found the inspiration of so much of their future work.

It was at this time that Morris began to write verses in the old ballad style, composing them rapidly and apparently without effort, remarking to his friends: "Well, if that is poetry, it's easy enough to make, anyhow."

In 1856 comes the "Annus Mirabilis" of his life, his introduction to Rossetti. It is curious to note how on his first visit to the artist's studio in Chatham Place he assumes much the same position to Rossetti as Rossetti did a year or two before to Madox Brown, when he sought his advice and help. On this first visit Rossetti was busily engaged on the little water-colour drawing of a monk painting from a dead mouse. The drawing, entitled "Fra Pace," was exhibited at the recent Loan Exhibition, held at the Tate Gallery in the summer of 1923. Rossetti on his part was much struck both by the work and the personality of the young Welshman, and writes to his friend, William Allingham: "I have just met one of the nicest young fellows in—Dreamland."

In the same year Burne-Jones meets Hol-

man Hunt just back from the Holy Land: "Such a grand-looking fellow, such a splendour of a man, with a great wiry golden beard and faithful violet eyes—oh, such a man."

It is fine to see such enthusiasm, but it is Rossetti who calls it forth to the full. In fact nothing is more striking than the way the personality of Rossetti dominates the whole circle. "All evening through," Burne-Jones records about this time, "Rossetti talked most gloriously, such talk as I do not believe any man could talk beside him." And it was not merely an ephemeral influence that ceased when the magnetism of his actual presence was removed.

Lady Burne-Jones writes: "As long as Edward lived, he said he never did anything without wondering what Gabriel would have thought of it." And Madox Brown said that after Rossetti's death he realised that he had been working always with the feeling of Rossetti's approval or disapproval before his mind.

Max Beerbohm hits off the situation beautifully in his delightful drawing of the scene in Rossetti's garden. Rossetti the centre of an adoring group; William Bell Scott, with pro-

truding underlip, "wondering what all these fellows see in Gabriel."

Such was the state of affairs when in 1857 the little group under the leadership of Rossetti undertook the decoration of the walls of the Oxford Union. Rossetti dominated everything. His word was law, and he carried them all along on the wave of his enthusiasm. We all know the unfortunate results of the entire lack of technical knowledge which led to the premature decay of the actual work. None of them knew anything about the processes of painting on plaster. The walls, in fact, were not even plastered, but merely white-washed on the top of the bricks, and the surface was broken and uneven. The surface began to flake off within a few months after it was painted.

Perhaps, after all, if the work could not be adequately preserved, it is well that it has perished so completely. The paintings are now a legend; they come as the expression of a brief and passing glory, dazzling while they lasted, soon to fade, and exist only as a memory and an ideal.

Of Rossetti's panels we still have a hint in

some wonderful drawings. Burne-Jones' part of the decoration was a composition representing "Merlin and Vivien."

The earlier works of Burne-Jones show very strongly the influence of the stronger personality of Rossetti. The types, almost the mental atmosphere, are reproduced.

It is not until the painter's visit to Italy in 1862, in company with Ruskin, that we get the beginnings of more individual work.

One noticeable difference there was between Rossetti and Burne-Jones. Rossetti in his earlier years was hampered a great deal simply through lack of training. He tired of the Royal Academy Schools and impatiently cut short his training there. He tired of his training under Madox Brown and cut that short also. It was only in after years, by dint of long and assiduous practice, that he attained the technical mastery which marked his later works.

On the other hand Burne-Jones, though he did not start his serious art training until he had reached the years of manhood, set himself resolutely to make good the lack of early

training. He was unceasing in his labours. His wife says: "At the age of twenty-three he was always seen with a drawing portfolio under his arm."

And he managed to make himself a very fine craftsman. He never was a great draughtsman as Stevens was, or so precise as Millais or Holman Hunt were, and he never had the inimitable grace that marked Rossetti's drawings and hid their technical imperfections. But he became a wonderfully delicate draughtsman. His female forms were finer than his male forms, which lacked robustness, but especially in pencil his work was marked by a delightful delicacy. His studies of drapery were exquisite.

In 1860 Burne-Jones married Georgiana, daughter of the Rev. G. B. Macdonald, a Wesleyan minister. It is interesting to note that one of her sisters married another artist of Academic fame, Sir Edward Poynter, P.R.A., while another became the wife of J. Lockwood Kipling, Curator of the Museum at Lahore, and the mother of the well-known writer, Rudyard Kipling.

The first years of his married life were passed in Great Russell Street; then for some three years he lives in Kensington Square.

In 1867 he settled in a quaint, rambling old house, The Grange, North End Road, Kensington, a quiet secluded place, with a beautiful garden, which he occupied until his death in 1898.

It is noticeable that from the very beginning of his artistic career Burne-Jones is intensely interested in decorative art. As early as 1857 he makes his first design for stained glass. Messrs Powell of the Whitefriars Glass Works had approached Rossetti for a design for a window; he was too busy with other work and passed on the commission to his young friend. The subject depicted was the "Good Shepherd." In the years between 1857 and 1861 he carried out a number of designs for stained glass for Messrs Powell, improving rapidly with each fresh experience. The last and most important of the series was a design for Waltham Abbey Church, representing the Creation.

But in 1862 the firm of Morris, Marshall,

Faulkner & Co.—of which Burne-Jones was one of the original partners — was formed, and henceforth monopolised his decorative designs.

It is certainly in stained glass that we see his powers at their brightest and happiest. The tinge of melancholy which runs through all his work is counteracted by the glory of luminous colour, luminous as no painting can ever be, as coloured light itself is the medium used by the artist, and so a frank joyousness is the note of these works. The earlier windows carried out by Messrs Powell are soon surpassed by those issued by Morris' firm, and these are widely distributed over the country, a fine example being in St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, while in Oxford, in Birmingham and in London are other beautiful specimens. One of the finest of all is in America: "David Giving Solomon Instructions for the Building of the Temple," which was placed in Holy Trinity Church, U.S.A., in 1882.

Among other decorative work carried out for Morris' firm was tile-painting. In an early

MIRROR OF VENUS

Sir E. Burne-Jones

From a photograph by F. Hollyer, London

set of tiles illustrating the story of the "Sleeping Beauty," executed for Mr Birket Foster's house at Witley, we have the germ of the great Brier Rose series of pictures.

In very early days the artist turned his attention towards designing for needlework, and some of his most charming efforts are to be seen in designs for embroideries. Weightier and more important designs were made to be carried out in tapestry, one of the most beautiful being the "Passing of Venus," an unfinished sketch for which hangs in the Tate Gallery.

One of the largest schemes of decoration carried out by Burne-Jones was the Music-room of Lord Balfour's (then Mr A. J. Balfour) house at 4 Carlton Gardens, on which the artist was occupied from 1875 right down to 1893. Ten designs in water-colour are now in the Tate Gallery and give us an idea of the completed work.

The subject is the story of Perseus. On the space between the panels the wall surface is covered with a design in scrollwork, designed by William Morris, and intended to be carried out in raised plaster. Of the panels themselves

only one or two of the most important are carried out in a full scheme of colouring. Some, such as those above the doorways, are carried out in relief, gesso on panelled oak, and the whole scheme is not only harmonious in general tone, but full of variety in the treatment of the different parts.

Mosaic, the most durable of all forms of decoration, also attracted the artist, and in the American Protestant Episcopal Church in Rome is a great series carried out by the Venetian firm of Salviati from his designs.

For Morris' volumes, issued from his famous Kelmscott Press, he also made a series of exquisite black and white illustrations.

In decorative art alone, then, his achievements would be sufficient to secure him a place among the first artists of the nineteenth century. But the artist was essentially a dreamer, living in a fairy world of his own, cut off from this everyday, workaday world, and it is in his purely pictorial work that his imaginative faculty finds its fullest scope.

His earliest pictures, as has been noted, were strongly influenced by the personality of Ros-

setti, but his visits to Italy widened his field of imaginative vision. A new influence, almost more potent than that of Rossetti, also makes itself felt, that of Botticelli.

In the "Mirror of Venus," Botticelli's "Venus" lives again; the haunting sadness, like a strain of plaintive music, that breathes in the Florentine master's panels, comes to life again in the works of Burne-Jones. It matters little what the subject is, be it a religious one, one drawn from old legend or fairy tale, from Greek mythology, or from ballad lore, the melody, beautiful as it is, is always pitched in the minor key.

At first he works quietly away, and though "The Merciful Knight" was painted in 1863, "The Wine of Circe" in 1863-69, the "Chant d'Amour" in 1868-77, "The Beguiling of Merlin" in 1872-77, it was not until the opening of the Grosvenor Gallery, in 1877, that he was really revealed to the public as a painter.

To the opening Exhibition he contributed the six panels entitled, "The Days of Creation," "The Mirror of Venus," "The Beguiling of Merlin," and five single figure designs,

Temperantia, Fides, Spes, St George and a Sybil, and he at once sprang into fame.

The features of the Exhibition in fact were the paintings of Burne-Jones and of Whistler. Ruskin warmly praised the first and violently condemned the second, and the sequel was the notorious libel action of the following year.

Burne-Jones was called as a witness in defence of Ruskin, and though Whistler's art was almost the antithesis of his own, and appealed little to his personal taste, his testimony in Ruskin's favour was rather half-hearted, for as he pathetically remarked : " I must speak the truth," and he could not bring himself to deny that Whistler's work possessed fine artistic qualities.

From now onward he was not only assured of a leading place among British artists, but he had established a place in the national affections. He had little to do with official art. He was made an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1885, but never became a full member and resigned in 1893.

He continued to exhibit at the Grosvenor

Gallery till 1888, when he transferred his allegiance to the newly-built New Gallery. Though most of his chief works are still in private hands, some have found their way into public collections, and through the medium of reproductions many of them—"The Mirror of Venus," "The Golden Stairs," "Love among the Ruins," are typical examples—have become household words. When Queen Victoria bestowed upon the artist the honour of a baronetcy in 1897, she was but giving expression to the public feeling.

Burne-Jones died suddenly at The Grange in June 1898. His whole life was singularly retiring. He lived only for his art.

Extremely painstaking in his methods he followed out a system not unlike Leighton's. The figures were drawn first in the nude; innumerable separate studies were made of the action of each figure, and of the draperies, and a picture remained for years on his easel, gradually brought by loving touches to full completion.

But in spite of the length of the process, we have not the coldness which marks Leighton's

flawless work: he never loses the glamour and the poetry.

Perhaps the most beautiful of all his works are the exquisite pencil heads, drawn with such wonderful delicacy of vision and delicacy of touch, of which some fine examples are to be seen in the Tate Gallery.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ALFRED STEVENS

CHAPTER SEVEN

ALFRED STEVENS

ALFRED STEVENS IS NOT ONE OF OUR favourite painters; indeed his painting, though unsurpassed by any of his contemporaries, represent but a small part of his activities, and his reputation as an artist rests first and foremost on his sculpture.

But when some quibbler asked Michelangelo which was the greatest art, Architecture, Sculpture, or Painting, he replied: "*Vé un' Arte sola*" ("I know but one art") and this is the motto adopted by Stevens when he sent in his design for the Wellington Monument. All three arts were practised by him: he viewed each in relation to the others, and to this breadth of scope, to this wider outlook, he added a concentrated force, an individuality, which gives a personal touch to everything he produced.

Sir Joshua Reynolds in his discourses talked much of the grand style as the ultimate aim of all truly aspiring students, but his practice was the expression of something quite different. Sir Joshua's art kindled into life at the contact with Nature, not in response to the

formal rules of the grand style. And the same is true with most of our great English masters.

One man and one man only has practised the grand style in English Art—Alfred Stevens. He worked quietly, apart from Academical circles, letting the movements of the day pass him by, serene in the knowledge that time would give him his true place. And so he stands a solitary figure, not showing in the ephemeral Exhibitions, having no share in the honours distributed among the successful, working hard, earning little, but building steadily a permanent memorial which seems to loom up with greater and greater impressiveness as years go by.

In the Tate Gallery a room is devoted to his memory, with examples of his sculpture, his preparatory drawings and his decorative paintings, and by a judicious purchase on the part of that much maligned body, the Trustees of the Chantrey Bequest, a number of these works, formerly on loan, have now been added permanently to the collection. In the same Gallery is also a series of magnificent portraits.

In South Kensington Museum are replicas

of most of his sculptures, and a great series of drawings, while in St Paul's Cathedral stands the one great work of his genius that he was enabled to carry to completion, the Monument to the Duke of Wellington, now moved from the obscure side chapel in which it remained for years, and standing in the position for which it was designed, with the rejected equestrian figure forming the appropriate crown of the structure.

Not only can we claim that nowhere in Europe, since the days of Renaissance Italy, has there been produced in sculpture a work of equal importance; we might with truth say that you may search in vain among the great works produced in Renaissance Italy itself to find a work wherein architecture and sculpture are combined with such an intimate interrelation of parts—where in addition to the beauty of the individual details, each leads inevitably up to, and plays its part in building up, one great unity. Michelangelo in sculpture is supreme, but in the Medici tombs the sculptural figures dominate everything; the architectural setting is a background and nothing

more. In Stevens' great work the unity is the monument; it speaks to you as a whole; the voices of the multitude of its parts blend into one harmony. And to my mind the harmony strikes on the ear with a different sound from that of the Italian masters.

Sir Walter Armstrong, in his monograph on the artist, suggests that Stevens returned from Italy "as completely a mediæval Italian in sympathies and powers, in modes of thought and work, as Pisano or Ghiberti themselves." But in spite of the classic mould to which he seems to fit himself naturally and without imitative effort, it seems to me that the personality expressed is essentially English. In all its various forms it expresses the sobriety, the weight and dignity, which mark so many typical great Englishmen—Reynolds, Crome, Richard Wilson, Dr Johnson, Milton, above all, Shakespeare.

In Stevens we have the curious case of an Englishman who develops untouched by the Gothic tradition. His entire art training was received in Italy, and the Gothic spirit seems something alien to his nature. In his own

words: "The round arch is the strongest way of bridging a space, the pointed arch strikes against the principle, it is a lie!" And so into the old outworn Italian mould we have poured a new vigour and freshness. And a certain northern seriousness and balance and solidity temper the Latin poise and grace.

Alfred Stevens was born at the little town of Blandford, in Dorset, in 1817. His father was a house-painter and decorator, evidently a man of some capacity and originality, and after his scanty schooling was over the boy helped him in his work. He had already begun to paint, as a portrait of himself at the age of fourteen shows, and his talents attracted the attention of the Hon. and Rev. Samuel Best, Rector of Blandford, St Mary, who set about to do what he could to help him to a proper training.

The first idea was that he should be apprenticed to a London painter, and inquiries were made from Landseer, then at the height of his fame, as to his terms. Landseer, however, wanted a premium of £500, which was far in excess of the money available, and as an alter-

native it was decided to send the boy to Italy. We cannot be too thankful for this decision which enabled Stevens to obtain in his youth such a training as had been received by no other English artist.

Accordingly, with £60 in his pocket, given by the good Mr Best, he set out for Italy at the age of sixteen. Naples was his first stopping-place, but in the nine years of his sojourn he travelled far and wide over Italy. In Florence alone he is said to have copied in pencil all the old frescoes in the churches there, and he was familiar with every monument of note in Italy. For it was art as a whole that he studied: architecture, painting, applied art, he took them all within his grasp, he viewed each in its relationship with the others.

And though he attended art schools only at intervals, and entered for no prizes or diplomas, he managed to make himself a thoroughly competent craftsman.

It is curious to note that apart from the initial £60 he appears to have had little or no help from home, but though a mere boy in a strange country, to have maintained him-

self while he studied. At one time we find him acting temporarily as a clerk of works, and making himself very unpopular with the workmen, by his rooted objections to all "ca' canny" methods. In 1841 and 1842 he worked in Rome as assistant to Thorwaldsen the sculptor. On the latter's departure from Rome in 1842, he came back to England, after nine years' absence, with a thorough training and an unequalled knowledge and understanding of Italian art.

He landed in England practically penniless and had to borrow money from his friend, Mr Pegner of Southampton, for the journey down to Blandford. There he stayed quietly for about two years, preparing for his coming to London, where he arrived in 1844.

In 1845 he was appointed Master of Architectural Drawing, Perspective Modelling and Ornamental Painting—"master of everything," as he wrote in a letter to a friend—at the new School of Design at Somerset House. Though he only occupied the post for two years—resigning in 1847—it was sufficient for him to make his mark. He

was loved by the students, and the lines on which he worked were followed in after years, when the larger school at South Kensington was inaugurated.

We next hear of him working for an architect, Leonard W. Collman, who became one of his lifelong friends, decorating a house at Deysbrook, near Liverpool. It is notable that in this early work we have a hint of his somewhat trying habits of procrastination. Collman gave him ample notice, but as time went on and nothing was done, he began to get anxious. At last, when the time had nearly expired, Stevens turned up and painted the whole decoration in a fortnight.

From about this time, the year 1848, when he was thirty years of age, dates the head of "Judith," in the Tate Gallery, and also the delightful study of "King Arthur and his Mother" in the same collection.

He also designed a magnificent bronze door for Pennethorne's Geological Museum in Jermyn Street, which, though he had full powers given him, was never actually carried out. This dilatoriness in execution, perhaps due

to an extreme fastidiousness, is the characteristic of the artist through life.

In the year 1850 Stevens was on a visit to a young man Mitchell, one of his pupils at the School of Design in London, who had obtained the position of head-master at the Art School in Sheffield. There was great competition among the metal workers of Sheffield, and one of the leading firms, Messrs Hoole, Green Lane Works, had just lost their chief designer, who had gone over to a rival establishment.

At this juncture, Hoole goes to Mitchell and asks him if he can tell him of any suitable person for the post. Mitchell tells him that the man of all others is on the spot.

Accordingly, Stevens was engaged, and for twenty months designed stoves, fenders and other domestic metal work. So successful was he that Hoole's exhibits obtained the first prize at the Exhibition of 1851, and it is not too much to say that he revolutionised the type of design followed in the metal trade. Up to this time a Rococo style, the work chiefly of inferior foreign designers, was in vogue.

Stevens went back to classic models, but treated them with wonder ul judgment and understanding of the capacity of the material and the limitations due to the processes used. Particularly happy are some of his combinations of metal, bronze, brass and steel. Among more delicate works are some wonderfully chased daggers worthy of Holbein.

The casting and other processes were carried out under his own eye, and we find that students of the School of Art would come to Green Lane Works, and work there for small pay, to have the invaluable experience. Stevens, too, in an informal way, would visit the school, and it is probably due a good deal to the influence of his personality and teaching that Mitchell was able to raise the attendance at the school from thirty students to two hundred.

In 1852 he designs the little bronze lion for the British Museum railings, perhaps his best known and most popular work.

In the year 1856 he enters for the competition for the Wellington Monument, and so begins the great work of his life.

The Duke had died in 1852 and Parliament voted the sum of £100,000 for a public funeral. Of this sum £20,000 remained still undisposed of, and it was proposed with it to erect a monument to the Duke, to be placed under one of the arches in St Paul's Cathedral. The competition was a public one on the usual lines; the designs were sent in with a "motto" attached; the names of the competitors being placed in a sealed envelope only opened after the award. It is significant that Stevens' motto was: "I know but one art."

During the work of the preparation of his model Stevens was helped by loans from his old friend, Mr Pegner of Southampton, and his new friend, Hoole of Sheffield, who was a firm believer in his powers.

The Models, eighty-three in number, were sent in in 1857, and exhibited at Westminster Hall. The jury was a strange one: two noblemen of great wealth; one Churchman, Dean Milman of St Paul's; one statesman, Mr Gladstone; and one technical expert, Professor Cockerell. The award was signed by all the members, with the exception of Professor

Cockerell. The first premium was £700, the second £500, the third £300, the fourth £200, then followed five of £100 each. Stevens's design was placed sixth, one of the £100 premiums being awarded to him.

But when a model of the arch under which the monument was to be placed was made, and each competition model placed in position, it was found that the only design that was suitable or, indeed, possible, was that by Stevens.

Here was a dilemma. Fortunately the First Commissioner of Works, Lord John Manners, was a man both of sound taste and of decision of character, and after taking expert advice in the matter, he took the bold course of setting aside the award, and giving the commission for the work to Stevens.

Unfortunately, with a mistaken view of compensating the first and second on the list, who after all were sufficiently paid by the premiums they had gained, they were given some subsidiary decorative work in the Bishops' Consistory Court, St Paul's, and £6000 of the original £20,000 available, deducted and devoted to this purpose.

This left £14,000 for the monument, but Stevens was actually asked to sign a contract to carry it out for £11,000. This was a little too much—or too little—and Stevens stuck out for the £14,000, which was finally allowed.

But the sculptor was placed in an awkward position. He had planned his work in the expectation of having £20,000 to carry it out with—now there was a deficit of more than a fourth. Also one of the stipulations, entirely unnecessary, was that a full-sized model, both of the marble and the metal parts, should first be prepared and placed in position. About eight years were wasted in the preparation of this model.

But after all we can quite understand that to Stevens the one vital thing was to obtain the commission. He had a total disregard for money, and here was the opportunity of a lifetime, to rear a monument to a national hero, in the great Church of the metropolis. Little wonder that he accepted the work under any conditions and trusted to time to smooth out the difficulties.

Naturally there was a good deal of dis-

satisfaction at the selection of Stevens. The influence of the Court—*i.e.* the Prince Consort—it was insinuated had resulted in the employment of a foreign trained, rather than a really native English artist, and so on.

Dean Milman also, for some unknown reason, objected to the equestrian figure of the Duke which crowned the model: "I can offer no objection to the design, provided the Duke does not ride into the Cathedral on the top of his own monument," and the artist was graciously permitted to leave it out. However, it was an essential part of the design, and Stevens, perhaps with a prophetic instinct, prepared the full-sized model of this part along with the rest.

To make a full-sized model of the monument required no ordinary studio, but he was successful in finding at Haverstock Hill, on the road to Hampstead, a building used as a temporary church. This he adapted to his use, taking up his abode in the house adjoining.

The work on the monument occupied the painter until the end of his life, and was subject to many delays. In one respect he was for-

tunate. He was hampered by no committees but had a free hand.

But he had rashly promised to complete the full-sized model in a year, and at the cost of £1600. By 1861 he has spent £2800, and the model is not ready. Harassed by the officials and getting money from them by driblets, Stevens struggles along, and finally in 1867 the model is completed.

Fortunately by this time the swing of Time's pendulum has brought Lord John Manners back again into his old position of First Commissioner of Works, and Stevens for a while has no further trouble.

The work on the actual monument goes on by leaps and bounds. He has fifteen workmen employed on the marble work, he, himself, working on the models, and the moulds for the bronze work. He is lavish in his expenditure; he wants the best regardless of cost. The finest Carrara marble is employed, and a column three-fourths finished is set aside when it shows unpleasant greyness.

In 1869 the position is this: he has received £12,466 out of the £14,000, but the monument

is far from finished. The marble part is half erected, but the casting of the bronze parts has not begun.

At this juncture a new Commissioner of Works, a Mr Ayrtoun, comes on the scene. He is a man of little culture, with no understanding of art, or artists. To him it is a simple business matter, like the contract for laying a railway. Here is a contractor who has engaged to do a piece of work for a certain sum; the money is nearly gone, the work is not nearly finished. "Stevens had received $\frac{11}{12}$ of the price agreed and had only produced $\frac{7}{12}$ of the work." The contract therefore must be terminated and a more competent person brought in to finish it. How simple these things are when really business-like methods are brought to bear upon them!

So Stevens was ordered to deliver up all his drawings, models, and unfinished work for the monument. Everything was placed in the centre of his studio. It was boarded up and he was forbidden to touch it.

But quietly and unobtrusively as Stevens was working, the knowledge of the extra-

ordinary quality of the work he was producing was known to the initiated, and there began to be movements in higher circles. Mr Lowe, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, a man of taste and refinement, stepped in. He sent for Mr Ferguson, the well-known writer on architecture, who had no difficulty in satisfying him that to put the unfinished work into any other hands was out of the question.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that from the business point of view Stevens was very trying, almost impossible. Finally a solution was found of considerable ingenuity. Stevens' old friend, Mr Collman, for whom he had so often worked before, was placed in charge of the monument, with the sum of £8500 at his disposal, the actual work being carried out as before by Stevens, with an entirely free hand, but all payments being made by Collman.

Take it all round, the arrangement worked wonderfully well. There was some friction of course, but the monument grew steadily and by 1875 it was practically complete. There was one omission, the equestrian statue on top,

but of that Stevens had made the full-size model (one fortunate result at least from that unfortunate stipulation). But he had been working for many years almost without cessation, continually harassed by money worries, and his health began to fail. Still he struggled on. At last, on 1st May 1875, he died suddenly of a stroke of apoplexy in the night.

The monument for years remained in the Bishops' Consistory Court, but was finally moved to its intended position under one of the arches. In 1911 the completing touch was made by the bronze equestrian group, cast by Mr John Tweed from Stevens' own model, being placed in position.

It stands now, Britain's greatest achievement in sculpture, complete, as its author intended it to be. The design is at once dignified and impressive, and wonderfully well adapted to its setting. Below is the effigy of the dead soldier in bronze, on a beautifully shaped sarcophagus, surrounded with trophies, the arms of the conquered and the names of his victories. Above is a triumphal arch, with large bronze groups on each side : Truth and False-

hood, Valour and Cowardice, and the equestrian figure crowns the whole.

Particularly fine are the bronze groups, and here it is said Stevens has taken his revenge in traditional style, by using the features of Mr Ayrtoun in the representation of Falsehood.

This great work occupied the main part of Stevens' life from 1856 until his death in 1875, but one other important undertaking, unhappily not carried to completion, also demands special notice: the decoration of the dining-room at Dorchester House, Park Lane.

The commission for the work was given by Mr R. S. Holford in 1858, whose house had recently been built on Italian Renaissance lines from designs by Lewis Vulliamy. It included the entire decoration and furnishing of the drawing-room, not only mural decorations, but mantelpiece, sideboard, door, mirrors, chairs, curtains, etc.

The work was started in 1858 and carried on at intervals until his death, but Stevens' methods of work were slow and irregular; he was being perpetually harassed by the Government about the completion of the Wellington

Monument, and he died, leaving the decorations of the dining-room only half finished.

The most important feature in the whole scheme was the large fireplace in different coloured marbles, with two magnificent crouching female figures, acting as *caryatides* at each side. Though obviously suggested by the figures on the Medici Tombs, these have a distinctive quality of their own, and in their combination of decorative fitness and great sculptural beauty stand out as the finest productions of British Sculpture. Particularly noticeable is the way in which the same general arrangement of line is repeated in each figure, and yet in the position of the limbs each is given an individual treatment, so that all effect of monotony is avoided.

On the ceiling were to have been paintings of the Judgment of Paris, Æneas and Anchises, and other subjects, and round the walls scenes from early English history, representing the fight between Corineus and Goëmagot (the same Magog that figures in the Lord Mayor's Show), and other stories.

The painting of the Judgment of Paris has

been started, and one or two of the wall panels, and those scraps are now in the Tate Gallery, along with countless studies in red chalk for the various figures composing them.

The legend illustrated is taken from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *British History* (Stevens' source was the translation in Bohn's Library). Brutus and his host, among whom Corineus is one of the chief, pass through the Pillars of Hercules, and reach Albion, to which they give the name Britain. The island is inhabited by giants, of whom Goëmagot is one of the chief. In a great battle all the giants are slain but Goëmagot, who is taken alive, and pitted in a wrestling match against Corineus, who seizes him in his arms and hurls him over a cliff into the sea.

One of the most striking groups represents the struggle of Corineus and Goëmagot.

Of all the different studies—fighting men, women and children on the battlements, archers, and so on—one of the finest is a magnificent drawing of a boy stringing a bow; worthy to compare with the finest drawings of the old Italian masters.

The work had been paid for in advance, but on Stevens' death the patron, Mr Holford, behaved with great generosity, saying that Stevens was "a thoroughly honest man and an industrious and hard worker, who spent very little on himself, and no doubt died a poor man." He refused to make any claim on his estate and accepted the work already done, along with the preliminary drawings and sketches, in full discharge. Most of the drawings and the unfinished panel paintings, along with a cast of the mantelpiece, are now in the Stevens' Room at the Tate Gallery.

Among other works of Stevens which should be mentioned is the model of a proposed Memorial to the Exhibition of 1851, now in South Kensington. Stevens was also commissioned to execute a Mosaic of Isaiah for one of the spandrels under the dome of St Paul's. This was carried out, and designs made for the other three spandrels, and a scheme prepared for the decoration of the whole dome—a work surpassing in magnitude the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel itself. It, however, only exists in the embryo form of the design. Another fine de-

coration was designed for the interior of the dome of the British Museum Reading-room, also unfortunately never carried out.

Stevens' completed work, then, like Michelangelo's, only represents an imperfect fragment of the great conceptions of his teeming brain.

His ordinary pictorial work, which we have left to the last, is insignificant in quantity but of wonderfully fine quality. We have already referred to the head of Judith and the little study of "King Arthur and his Mother" in the Tate Gallery. There is also in the same Gallery a magnificent series of portrait studies, mostly of his own friends, and apparently painted for his own pleasure.

Among these are a wonderfully decorative and powerfully handled study of John Morris Moore in armour; a most sympathetic little study of an artist seated in his studio, and a haunting picture of a mother and child. The last, which is unfinished, represents the wife and child of a friend. The mother was ill when the picture was begun and died before it could be completed.

Perhaps the finest of the whole series, however, is the portrait of his artist friend, W. B. Spence. As searching as sculpture in its modelling, reticent and refined in colouring, it is marked above all by the extraordinary force with which the character is presented. The eyes look out of the picture with almost the concentrated fire of Dürer's portrait of his father. Equally fine, in a quieter vein, is the beautiful portrait of Mrs Collman in the National Gallery, so restful in its harmony of russet gold, purple and brown and grey.

These portraits of Stevens are unlike other English portraits in that they stand apart from the ordinary evolution of English portraiture, unaffected by the work of Holbein, Van Dyck, Rubens, Rembrandt, or the great English masters of the eighteenth century. He takes his inspiration direct from Italy, and yet his work is as unmistakably English as Sir Joshua's.

As a man he was singularly unaffected and unself-assertive. Though with abundant confidence in himself—it is very striking how the controversies of the day pass him by, he lives in a world of his own—he had none of the arts

MRS COLEMAN

National Gallery

of the courtier. With official art he had nothing to do.

His early training had given him self-reliance. As a mere boy when in Italy he earned the respect and esteem of the people. When by the permission of the Austrian Government, then the supreme power in Italy, plaster moulds were made of the bronze gates of Ghiberti, Stevens was asked to act as the representative of the Government in the matter.

He was small in stature and had the massive rounded skull and dome-like forehead characteristic of so many great Englishmen and Scotsmen — Reynolds, Crome, Goldsmith, Burns, Raeburn are of a similar type. In person he was extremely neat, always dressed in black. In personal habits he was the reverse of particular, being utterly careless and Bohemian in his ways. When some one sent him a case of wine, it lay in the studio, just as it was, and was used bottle by bottle, the straw getting all over the floor. He never married. Though quick-tempered, he had the power of inspiring confidence and making friends, who stuck to him through life.

OUR FAVOURITE PAINTERS

As the years roll on, and the figures of the past recede into the distance, we begin to be able to see things in their proper perspective. Figures that appeared important to their contemporaries dwindle to insignificance, other figures, neglected and passed by in the petty affairs of daily life, loom up more and more conspicuously. And of these the figure of Alfred Stevens grows steadily in importance, and every day makes his position as a great Englishman and a great artist more secure.

CHAPTER EIGHT

GEORGE FREDERICK WATTS

CHAPTER EIGHT

G. FREDERICK WATTS

ONE OF THE GREATEST FIGURES OF nineteenth-century art is George Frederick Watts. Born in 1817 and dying in 1904, at the advanced age of eighty-seven, his working life coincides almost exactly with the reign of Queen Victoria.

Almost more than any other painter he embodies the ideals of the Victorian epoch in his work. He is essentially a didactic painter. "My intention," he says, "has not been so much to paint pictures that will charm the eye as to suggest thoughts that will appeal to the imagination and the heart, and kindle all that is best and noblest in humanity."

In this he is to some extent working on similar lines to the Pre-Raphaelites, particularly to Madox Brown and Holman Hunt. But when we come to the actual work we find an entire difference both in feeling and in handling. One might say that the work of the two last painters is essentially Teutonic. The technique is the technique of Holbein, the vision akin to the vision of Dürer. It is work

essentially realistic, unimaginative, matter of fact, even commonplace. The actual fact is realised with all the intensity at the painter's command; it is depicted with the uttermost exactitude of detail. The eye is focused successively on each object in the picture, every detail is painted as if seen through a magnifying glass.

But Watts belongs to another world—the world of the imagination; his vision is that of a poet—a poet with somewhat of the lofty austerity of a Milton, handling grand themes in a sober and majestic way. "For," he says, "a great work of art is a noble theme treated in a noble manner." And the treatment is the reverse of the Pre-Raphaelite method. Instead of the minute and literal rendering of detail, we have an avoidance of too great actuality. The painter wishes to lift us up into another world from that of fact.

Ruskin had one of his early pictures in his house for a time, but did not buy it. Though its loftiness of tone appealed strongly to him, he objected to the handling—there was not enough detail.

And whereas Madox Brown and Holman Hunt are essentially Teutonic in their outlook, Watts goes back to the classics for his inspiration. But there is a difference between the outlook of Watts and that of Alfred Stevens. In the work of the latter, classic form is born again breathing an English spirit. It is work entirely free from the didactic element, almost pagan in its pure joy in beauty of line and form. But in the work of Watts there is none of the pagan joy in life. The largeness of style of the Greek work appealed strongly to him. His first school he said was the Elgin Marbles. And to this feeling for grandeur of form he adds a feeling for rich and sonorous colour. Titian and Tintoretto are the masters he follows here. But while the works of the great Venetians are full of pulsating life, Watts' figures are strangely remote ; they move like wraiths in an atmosphere of their own. And both form and colour are used to express some didactic idea—everything leads up to that. And though he treats of both Biblical and classic subjects, he is most at home in these symbolical subjects not embodying the teach-

ings of any one creed, but based on the great unchanging facts of human life.

One curious thing is to be noted in his work. There is none of the craftsman's joy in the mere handling of his material. The texture of his paint is not beautiful. He gives you no expressive brushwork; the paint is crusted on almost dry. In his sculpture the surfaces are left rough—there is none of the caressing touch that delights in bringing out the full beauty of the material. Intimacy is sacrificed to get loftiness and elevation of tone.

George Frederick Watts was born in London in the year 1817, his father, George Watts, being a musical instrument maker. The boy was delicate, being subject through life to severe sick headaches which utterly prostrated him for the time being, and was not able to have any regular schooling.

He soon showed artistic promise, and was early thrown into association with artists. A friend of his father, a Mr Behnes, a piano-maker, had two sons, William and Charles, both artists, and from them the young Watts

LOVE AND LIFE

Tate Gallery G. F. Watts

from a photograph by F. Hollyer, London

learned a good deal. There was also living in Behnes' house a French *émigré*, a sculptor, so that the boy had also an early introduction to this work.

At the age of sixteen we find him making portraits in chalk and selling them for 5s. each. Two years later, in 1835, he enters the Royal Academy Schools as a student.

In 1837, in his twentieth year, he exhibited at the Royal Academy two portraits and a study of a wounded heron. The last, which is now in the Watts Gallery, Compton, is a most interesting piece of work, fine in design, and already—in the dwelling on the tragedy of the wounded bird, as contrasted with the hunter on his steed seen in the distance—we have a hint of the didactic purpose which was later to be so characteristic of the painter.

At this time Watts makes the acquaintance of a family with whom he was destined to have a lifelong connection. There seems to have been something particularly fascinating about the personality of the young artist. He had a genius for friendship, and the friends he made

stuck to him for life. Mr Constantine Ionides, a Greek gentleman and the father of the collector whose pictures are now in South Kensington, commissioned him to make a copy of an old portrait of his father. The work was done and approved, and a commission for a portrait of Mrs Ionides followed. From first to last, during his long life, Watts painted five generations of the Ionides family.

In 1843 the young artist entered for the Westminster Hall Competition, and was fortunate enough to obtain a prize of £300 for his design: "Caractacus led in Triumph through Rome."

With the money so obtained he set out for Italy, going by Leghorn and Pisa to Florence. When his stay at Florence was nearly at an end he was reminded of an introduction he had obtained to Lord Holland who, at the time, was resident there. He called and was very kindly received. He was invited to spend a few days at the Casa Feroni, and the stay lengthened out to a period of about four years, partly spent at the Casa Feroni and partly at the Villa Carreggi, the ancient country-house of the Medici

family, full of wonderful associations. The artist was beloved by Lord and Lady Holland; a studio was specially fitted up for him in each house, and he was afforded every facility in following out his own peculiar bent. It is very characteristic how he used his opportunity. An early portrait of himself shows him to have a beautiful face, with something strangely ethereal about it, and his personal charm was great. But in this great household, with men of note coming and going, and everything conducted in grand style, he lived a simple and abstemious life.

He rose very early, and mixed comparatively little with the fashionable crowd. All his life he was absorbed in his work. Among other works he carried out a series of studies in the old fresco of the Italian masters. A work, painted at this time, was the "Scene from Boccaccio," a larger and later version of which is now in the Tate Gallery, while also dating from this period are the "Fata Morgana" and "Paolo and Francesca."

He also had opportunities of visiting other parts of Italy, and was particularly moved by

Michelangelo's work in the Sistine Chapel: "The greatest thing since the Parthenon."

In 1847, urged by Lord Holland, he entered for a second Westminster Hall Competition, and wassuccessful in obtaining a prize of £500 for his design: "Alfred Inciting the Britons to Resist the Danes." He now returned to England, and Mr R. S. Holford, whose acquaintance he had made in Italy, offered him a room at Dorchester House until he could find a suitable studio. Here he painted the picture, "Life's Illusions," now in the Tate Gallery.

With the burning desire for public service, so characteristic of him, Watts now offered to paint a great series of decorations in the interior of Euston Station, illustrating the history of the Cosmos, but his offer was not accepted. After some time he found a studio in Charles Street, Berkeley Square, where he painted the large "Scene from Boccaccio," now in the Tate Gallery. He also painted one of the first of his great series of portraits of famous men, "Lord John Russell," which he afterwards presented to the nation.

While he was working at Charles Street a

friend came to him one day, anxious to give him an introduction to a particularly beautiful young girl, Miss Virginia Pattle, a sister of Mrs Thoby Prinsep. Watts, however, was absorbed in his work and paid little attention; but a day or two after he passed two very beautiful young women, and he wrote, saying that he was quite certain that one of them must be Miss Pattle. Inquiries proved this to be the case, and here again Watts forms a lifelong friendship.

Some time afterwards, finding Mr and Mrs Thoby Prinsep in search of a London residence, he brings to their notice Little Holland House, in the corner of Holland Park, which they take on a twenty-one years' lease. Watts takes up his abode with them, and Little Holland House remains his home until it was pulled down twenty-four years later. The beautiful Miss Virginia Pattle shortly afterwards marries Lord Somers, and is painted again and again by Watts, one of the finest examples being in the Tate Gallery.

Mrs Thoby Prinsep, one of the most motherly of women, in particular exercised a

thoughtful care over the always precarious health of the painter.

Here, just as in Lord Holland's house in Florence, almost a recluse, he lives his own life, working strenuously. Rossetti he gets to know, and Rossetti one day takes Burne-Jones there to see this painter who paints queer subjects of "God and Creation."

Among the household he was known as "Signor," a title expressing the mingled feelings of affection, yet tempered with a certain respect and deference, with which he was treated. Among his many friends was the brilliant young Leighton, then at the height of his splendid young manhood, and who in 1866 built his house and studio in Holland Road.

"Don't envy me, envy Signor," said Leighton.

"Nature got tired when she was in the middle of making me, left off and went away and made a Leighton," said Signor.

The one form of sport or manly exercise in which Watts was able to take part was riding. He was a fine horseman, and when spending the winters at Esher used to hunt frequently.

One of his friends and associates at Little Holland House was Herschel, the astronomer. It was from the garden there that Herschel first saw the great comet of 1857. Another friend was Joachim, the violinist. We have a record of this friendship in the famous portrait of the musician.

In 1860 Watts completed his most important mural decoration: "Justice, a Hemicycle of Lawgivers," for Lincoln's Inn Hall. Here he was entertained to dinner by the Benchers, an honour conferred on no other artist except Hogarth, and presented with a gold cup and a cheque for £500, not as payment, "but as a testimonial of friendly feeling and appreciation of his generous gift." The work is probably the most important modern wall painting in England.

In 1864 Watts was married to Ellen Terry. It was a curious marriage: the young girl in all the charm of youthful beauty, full of superabundant vitality; the artist, nearly thirty years her senior, grave, remote, a semi-invalid, almost a recluse, absorbed in his work, and yet with a wonderful charm of personality. The

mutual attraction must have been great, but it is little to be surprised at that the marriage was not a happy one, and after a period of little more than a year the parties separated by mutual consent.

After the twenty-one years' lease of Little Holland House expired, attempts were made to renew it, but the ground was required to meet the growing demand for houses in Kensington, and after a yearly extension of time for several years, Watts built himself a new house and studio in Melbury Road, not far away, which he entered in 1876.

Here he carried on the same tranquil existence as before. In 1886 he was married again, at the age of sixty-nine, to Miss Mary Fraser Tytler, who was a congenial helpmate to him in his work and who survived him.

In 1891 he built his country house, Limnerslease, in Surrey, where he spent the last years of his life, producing a number of his most impressive works: "Sic Transit Gloria Mundi," "For He had Great Possessions," "Love Triumphant," and many others.

He died after a life full of accomplishment

LOVE TRIUMPHANT

Tate Gallery

in 1904. He was made an A.R.A. in 1867, an R.A. a month or two after, and was several times offered a baronetcy, which he refused. On the institution of the Order of Merit in 1902 he was one of the first recipients of the honour.

His great monument, however, is to be found in his work. He produced over 800 paintings in oil, and the number of his preparatory studies was great.

From the very beginning he set himself other aims than those followed by the majority of artists. His message was always to him the main thing: one might say he almost showed a certain indifference to the means by which it was expressed.

"I would have liked to do for modern thought," he said, "what Michelangelo did for theological thought." "The utmost for the highest" was his motto, and in all his work we find this seriousness of intention.

Added to this we have two great influences directing the methods he should follow. The first of them is his study of the Elgin Marbles. Their largeness of aspect, their remoteness

from the pettiness of daily life, their seriousness, appealed strongly to him. Then when he goes to Italy, the well-regulated splendour of Titian's sonorous colouring, especially in his serene old age, seemed to him just what was required to clothe the majestic Greek forms with life and a deeper spiritual significance.

His early works, his "Life's Illusions" (1849), "The Scene from Boccaccio" (1843-7), "Echo" (1843-7), are frankly essays in the style of Titian, carried out with great richness and splendour of colouring. As time goes on he touches a deeper note. In his "Sir Galahad" (1862) he takes up a subject akin to those of Rossetti and his group, but it is curious how differently he treats it. Rossetti wafts you away to a strange romantic land of his own. Avalon is a dream place, his colour sings to you like a strain of music; Burne-Jones has a more haunting note, the sense of the tragedy of life is there, a very touching human pathos; but with Watts we are lifted into higher regions, we breathe a loftier air, it is the spiritual essence alone that counts.

Classic myths or mediæval legends are

dealt with in the same lofty style. "Endymion," "Orpheus and Eurydice," "Paolo and Francesca" are treated with extraordinary loftiness, though with very great tenderness. Sometimes he misses his effect when the theme is obviously unsuited to his art. For instance his "Bacchanal" (in the Watts Gallery, Compton) fails absolutely to express the intoxicating *joie de vivre* which is the essence of the subject.

Biblical subjects, too, are handled in a more or less tentative fashion. We have the "Good Samaritan," "The Meeting of Jacob and Esau," "The Death of Cain," and other works of great dignity.

A more characteristic note is struck in the great series of allegorical or symbolical subjects, in which his natural genius finds fullest expression.

Of them all perhaps the most widely known and the greatest favourite of all is his "Hope." With her lyre in her hand, blindfolded she sits on the globe in the dim twilight, striving to pluck music out of the last remaining string. The whole picture is attuned to the same

harmony—the softly modelled crouching figure, the bare feet so beautifully shaped, the delicate draperies suggesting the form, the tender colour, grey and green, blue and silver, the gleaming light of the one star, like a note of music—here certainly Watts has achieved one of the most perfect of all his works.

Then we have the grimmer and more sombre studies. In the "Minotaur" and "Mammon" the brutalisation of power is expressed with astonishing force. In the first, the ox-like figure seems the very embodiment of bestial grossness; in the second, the seated figure of Mammon has something of the appalling, crushing force of a juggernaut.

Some of the very finest works date from the artist's old age.

We have the great "Eve" trilogy of the Tate Gallery, first exhibited at the New Gallery in 1896-7.

First the creation of Eve: "She shall be called woman." She rises upwards, a beautiful figure, half-hidden by birds and flowers and her own flowing hair, the whole glowing with golden light.

Then comes the "Eve Tempted," another glowing picture. Eve half-hidden in the blossoms of the Tree of Knowledge, her head bowed down to the whisper of the serpent, a richly-coated panther lying at her feet.

Lastly the final scene, "Eve Repentant." Here we have Eve once more shrouded in her flowing hair, hiding her face against a tree in an agony of remorse. The back of Eve is a new treatment of the nude, expressing in every line her poignant shame.

Even more impressive is the great love trilogy: "Love and Life," "Love and Death," and "Love Triumphant."

In the first we have a beautiful group. Love, a vigorous, youthful male figure, is assisting the steps of Life, a slender, girlish figure, up a steep and rocky path. The composition is a singularly beautiful one—the wings of Love seem to form a sort of protection to the shrinking form of the girl. The contrast of colour, too, is fine, the tender opalescent tones of the female figure contrasted with the stronger and more vigorous hues of the male.

In "Love and Death," Death, a towering

figure in silvery-white, moves slowly on with resistless impulse, entirely unheeding of the little figure of Love vainly trying with outstretched arms to bar the way. The inevitableness of the approach of Death is depicted with striking power.

In the last of the three "Love Triumphant" rises in the midst, his arms uplifted, and his voice raised in a pæan of joy. Beneath his feet vanquished for ever lie Time and Death.

Watts' sculpture was marked in a sense by the same qualities that distinguished his painting. There was an entire neglect of the technical details. We read of the Ghibertis, father and son, spending weeks polishing the surface of the Competition model for the gates of the Baptistery. Watts is thinking merely of the larger aspects and leaving the surfaces to take care of themselves.

And perhaps here his worship of the Elgin Marbles led him astray. We must remember that the great figure groups of the pediments were designed to be seen from below at a considerable distance; the frieze, too, was high up and placed in a dim light. Added to this, time

and the weather have worn and roughened the surface of the marble, so that now the appearance is very different from that which it must have originally presented.

In his marble bust of Daphne in the Tate Gallery the marble is left in the rough, merely squared out, not softened over to the semblance of flesh. A similar quality is seen in the bronze Clytie, regarding which he says: "My aim in this my first essay (in sculpture) has been to get flexibility, impression of colour, and largeness of character, rather than purity and gravity."

His most important works in this medium, however, are two great equestrian figures. The first, "Hugh Lupus, Earl of Chester," stands in the grounds of Eaton Hall, near Liverpool; the second, "Physical Energy," was designed for the Memorial to be erected to Cecil Rhodes in the Matoppo Hills. A replica is placed in Kensington Gardens.

A particularly notable phase of Watts' work is his portraiture. Here he brings the same loftiness of outlook which distinguishes his subject pictures. He deliberately sets him-

self to portray the great men of his time, with a view to presenting the series to the nation.

Such a series, carried out with such an object, was bound to show great inequalities, but when he got a subject which appealed to him, Watts sometimes rose in these portraits to great heights. At other times the result is disappointing. The "Tennyson," the "Browning," the "Rossetti," the "William Morris," none of these seem to me to express the man. But when we come to the "John Stuart Mill," the "Matthew Arnold," or the "Cardinal Manning," we reach some of the greatest portraiture of the century.

The last, with its curious skull-like head, its intensity of expression, its great seriousness, is a portrait of a Churchman worthy to be placed among the greatest works of that painter of religious emotion, "El Greco," while the "John Stuart Mill," with its silvery serenity, is like one of the works of Gentile Bellini.

Perhaps his finest portraits of all are intimate studies of friends, such as the stately Lady Somers of the Tate Gallery.

HOPE

Tate Gallery G. F. WATTS

from a photograph by F. Hollyer, London

Another outstanding example, perhaps the most artistic of all, is his head of Walter Crane. Here the handling of the paint is more liquid and has a more sympathetic quality than we usually find—the pigment being generally aggressively dry and crumbling.

Very charming, too, are his heads of young girls, an outstanding example being the early portrait of Mrs Langtry—the Jersey Lily.

Some of his studies of children are also delightful, such as the chubby little cherub in "Good Luck to your Fishing," or the little maiden, "Red Riding Hood," in the Birmingham Art Gallery.

In landscape, too, Watts produced some charming works. These represent more his holiday hours: visits to the East, or to the Highlands of Scotland, or some quiet scenes in the Isle of Wight.

The Scottish landscapes, especially, are marked by great richness of colour; the wide stretches of purple moors, the jagged blue mountain peaks against the sky.

But perhaps the most intimate note is struck

in the evening effects near Freshwater. Here the quiet little thatched cottages nestling under the hillside in the twilight are painted with great tenderness and truth.

The main note of Watts' long life is his passion for public service. Throughout his career he is strangely indifferent to wealth or public honours. Certainly his lines fell in pleasant places ; he never had the bitter struggles with fortune, which left their mark on so many and which warped so many fine natures. Despite the handicap of ill-health he was always enabled in ease and comfort to follow out his own desires. But no one had ever loftier ideals.

He seemed to be happiest to give his work, as witness the offer to decorate Euston Station, and the mural painting in Lincoln's Inn Hall.

To the National Portrait Gallery he presented a great series of thirty-one portraits of celebrated men, and in 1897 he presented a great series of his allegorical works to the Tate Gallery. There they now are displayed, along with a series of his portraits and landscapes and a fine bust of the painter by Alfred Gilbert, in

the special Watts Room dedicated to the painter's memory.

Another large collection of his works is open to the public, in what was his house at Limnerslease, near Compton, in Surrey.

CHAPTER NINE

FREDERIC, LORD LEIGHTON

CHAPTER NINE

FREDERIC, LORD LEIGHTON

OF ALL THE PRESIDENTS OF THE Royal Academy, two stand out as having most successfully filled the position, Sir Joshua Reynolds and Lord Leighton. Each combined in his own person the various qualifications necessary for the post. Each was a painter of great capacity, each had great social gifts, and each was essentially a man of his own times, for just as Sir Joshua embodies for us the spirit of the eighteenth century, so Lord Leighton stands for much that is most distinctive and characteristic in the Victorian era.

Sir Joshua's discourses to the Royal Academy students are still well worth reading, both as literature and as art criticism, while Lord Leighton's similar public utterances are weighty in thought, fine in diction, and were delivered with great eloquence.

In one respect Lord Leighton had the advantage of his great predecessor. Sir Joshua was always rather impatient of rivalry, and his relations with his fellow-artists were not

always of the most cordial nature; Lord Leighton, on the other hand, seems to have been universally esteemed and loved.

Frederic Leighton was born at Scarborough on 3rd December 1830. His father and grandfather were both physicians. The latter, Sir James Leighton, was court physician to the Tsar Nicholas of Russia, and his father, Dr Leighton, would in all probability have succeeded to the same position, but the climate of St Petersburg did not suit his wife, and he left Russia after a few years.

About this time Dr Leighton, who had every prospect of rising to eminence in his profession, began to suffer severely from deafness, which increased to such an extent that he was forced to give up practice, devoting the remainder of his life to abstract studies.

In 1840, when Leighton was ten years old, his mother had a severe illness, and a warmer, drier climate than England was recommended. The family travelled for some time on the Continent, visiting Germany, Switzerland and Italy, and a new world of beauty unfolded itself to the boy. Rome especially fascinated

him, and he filled sketch-books with his studies for he had already learned to draw.

In Rome he was allowed to have lessons under an artist, Signor Meli, but his general education was by no means neglected. His early training, indeed, under the eye of his father, was exceptionally severe and thorough. From the time he was ten years old he was made to study the classics, and at twelve could speak French and Italian fluently. To these languages he afterwards added German and, later still, Spanish. Dr Leighton, clinging to the hope that, in spite of his undoubted talent for drawing, the boy would follow the traditional family calling of medicine, himself taught him anatomy. In after years Leighton said that he knew more anatomy when fourteen than when he was President of the Royal Academy. His father told him the names of the bones and muscles, showed them to him in action and in repose, and then made him draw them from memory.

In 1841 the Leightons were in Frankfort, and then passed on to Florence, where Frederic studied at the Academy under two well-

known artists there, Bezzoli and Servolini. It was at this time that Leighton was allowed formally to take up the study of art as his profession. His father took some of his drawings to Hiram Powers, the sculptor of the well-known "Greek Slave," and asked his opinion.

"Shall I make him a painter?" said Dr Leighton.

"Sir, you cannot help yourself; Nature has done so already," was the reply.

"But what eminence can he hope to attain if I let him take up this career?"

"Let him aim at the highest," said the sculptor, "and I am certain he will get there."

He continued then to study seriously in Florence. It was however in 1843 at Frankfort that young Leighton first came under the teacher who was to have the greatest influence on the development of his art, the German painter, Steinle. Steinle was a member of the little group of Nazarenes, of whom Overbeck and Cornelius were leading figures. A man of great beauty of personal character, his lofty ideals rendered him an excellent mento

to the young painter, though it is questionable whether his rather cold, academic, though extremely conscientious work had altogether a good effect on his style. But the bond between master and pupil was undoubtedly deep affection on the one hand, and veneration and respect combined with sincere liking on the other. Throughout his life Leighton spoke of him as the teacher to whom he owed everything.

In 1845 we find him in Florence; in 1848 in Brussels, where he paints his first picture: "Othello and Desdemona," his elder sister being the model for Desdemona. Then he goes on to Paris, and finally back to his beloved master, Steinle, at Frankfort. As he writes to his mother on one occasion: "You think it is improbable that I shall find a second Steinle: I delight in the belief that there is none."

But his mind seems always to be turning to Italy. It is there that he finds his subjects. Between the years 1849 and 1852 he painted, besides several portraits, "Cimabue finding Giotto in the Fields of Florence," "The Duel between Romeo and Tybalt," and "The Death

of Brunelleschi," and in the year 1852 he sets out for Rome.

And now he begins to come into public notice. Gay, handsome, full of life and vivacity, the young fellow is liked wherever he goes and is soon a favourite in art circles in Rome.

We get a happy account by Giovanni Costa, who afterwards became one of his closest friends, of their first meeting. It was the artists' picnic at Cervera, a farm in the Roman Campagna. A donkey race was one of the great events of the day, and on the way the party had halted for breakfast, each tying his donkey to the fence. But suddenly one of the donkeys kicked over a beehive, and out flew the bees. All broke away but one little donkey who could not get loose. The picnic party scattered with the exception of "one young man, with fair curly hair, dressed in velvet who slipping on gloves and tying a handkerchief over his face ran to liberate the poor little beast." Giovanni Costa helped, and so the two met. Later in the day Giovanni won the donkey race, and Leighton the tilting at the ring!

It was during 1853 that he made the acquaintance of Mr and Mrs Sartoris (Adelaide Kemble), at whose house in Rome he was a welcome visitor, meeting there Thackeray, the Brownings, Lockhart, Marochetti, the sculptor, and many other interesting people. It was at this time that Thackeray wrote home to Millais, telling him: "I have met in Rome a versatile young dog, Leighton, who will run you hard for the Presidentship one day."

The work on which he is now engaged is the large canvas "Cimabue's Madonna Carried in Procession through the Streets of Florence." In the Spanish Chapel of the Church of Santa Maria Novella is a large fresco which contains a group of figures in the foreground, said to be portraits of Cimabue, Giotto, and other contemporary artists. A careful drawing was made by Leighton of these figures, which gave him his starting-point. Studies of other details followed; the figures at the window to the left, the Gothic shrine on the wall; and finally a detailed drawing of the whole composition is made in black and white on brown paper. These preliminary studies he takes

to his old friend and master, Steinle, for his criticism and advice.

The picture was sent to the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1855, where it created a great sensation. It is a huge horizontal composition about seventeen feet long. In the centre is Cimabue in white, leading the little boy Giotto by the hand; behind him on a stand is carried the picture of the Madonna. Figures with musical instruments walk in front, in bright gay costumes, and nobles and commons join in the procession. Behind, seen over the top of a wall which forms the background to the procession, is seen a distant view of San Miniato.

The handling is sharp, clear, and precise, every detail elaborated with Pre-Raphaelite minuteness, but there is a curious coldness about the picture, an aloofness which marks it off from the work of Madox Brown, of Millais or of Holman Hunt. In its formality of design, too, it follows definitely on the lines of classic art.

The picture was one of the sensations of the year. Ruskin for the first time in that year published his *Royal Academy Notes* and

devoted considerable space to the work of the young painter. It was bought on the opening day by Queen Victoria, at the price of 600 guineas. Was there ever a happier debut? In the summer of 1923 the picture was presented by His Majesty King George V. to the Scottish National Gallery, where it now hangs.

Leighton's action on getting the news of his success was characteristic. He rushed out to three of his less successful friends (one of them was George Mason, then unknown) and bought a picture from each.

He came to London then to find himself already famous, and made the acquaintance of Ruskin, Holman Hunt, Millais, Watts, and other leading figures of the London art world. He soon returned to the Continent, however, and the next four years were spent chiefly in Paris and in Italy. In 1859 he was in Capri, where he made the exquisite study in silver point of a lemon tree, now in Oxford, and in the Academy of 1860 was exhibited a little landscape, "Capri at Sunrise."

In 1860 he definitely settled in London, taking up his abode at 2 Orme Square, where

he resided until he built his famous house in Holland Park Road, six years later, and from this time he exhibited continuously at the Royal Academy.

In the sixties, like many other leading artists, we find Leighton employed on book illustration. He contributes a number of drawings to Dalziel's Bible: "Moses Viewing the Promised Land," "The Death of Abel," "Samson Carrying the Gates of Gaza," being some of the subjects treated by him.

In 1862 he received a commission which pleased him greatly, the illustration of George Eliot's *Romola* for *Cornhill's Magazine*. The subject was one after his own heart, and the authoress was delighted with his work. She writes him: "I never saw anything comparable to the scene in Nello's shop as an illustration. There could not be a better beginning." In a subsequent letter she says: "Nello is better than my Nello!"

In 1864 he was made an Associate of the Royal Academy, contributing in that year three pictures, the large and imposing "Dante at Verona," and two others, "Orpheus and

ATHLETE
(Sketch Model)

Tate Gallery — LORD LEIGHTON

Eurydice," and "Golden Hours," the last achieving a great popular success.

In 1866 Leighton visited Spain and was fascinated by the Moorish splendour of the Alhambra. He made a number of sketches in the gardens of the Alhambra and the Generalife, and in the following year he paid his first visit to Egypt and the East.

The year 1866 is memorable also for his first mural decoration painted for Lyndhurst Church, the subject being the parable of "The Wise and Foolish Virgins." This was followed by the two large mural paintings for South Kensington Museum: "The Industrial Arts of War and Peace," painted in the years 1872 and 1873, which stand out as his chief accomplishments in this field.

In 1868 he became a full Academician, and it is interesting to note that he was one of those chiefly instrumental in instituting the Winter Exhibitions of Pictures by Old Masters, which have done so much to spread a knowledge of art in this country.

In the steady stream of works which now proceeds from the artist's studio in Holland

Park Road, where he had as his near neighbour and close friend, G. F. Watts, it will suffice to name a few of the most outstanding.

The "Dædalus and Icarus" appeared in 1869, "Summer Moon" in 1872, the "Daphnephoria" in 1876, "Wedded" in 1882, "Captive Andromache" in 1888, "Greek Girls Playing Ball" in 1889, the "Bath of Psyche" in 1890, "The Return of Persephone" in 1891, "The Garden of the Hesperides" in 1892, "The Spirit of the Summit" in 1894, "Flaming June" in 1895.

In the "Daphnephoria" of 1876 he returns again to a processional subject similar to the early Cimabue picture. Like the earlier work, the painting is a large horizontal composition, seventeen feet long and over seven feet high. The subject represented is the triumphal procession held every ninth year at Thebes in honour of Apollo, so that in place of the picturesque costumes of gay colour of mediæval Italy, we have the nude figures and flowing draperies of classic times. The first is the brilliant work of the painter's youth, the second the more serene accomplishment of his middle age.

In the same year, 1876, he produced a masterpiece in another line of art, his famous portrait of Sir Richard Burton, K.C.M.G., now in the National Portrait Gallery.

To many, Leighton's portraits are the least satisfactory of his works. The aloofness of his art, his tendency to seek out abstract qualities, to lose the individual in the type, to formalise rather than to emphasise personal characteristics, even the very smoothness of his technique,—all these things are little suited to portraiture, and most of his female portraits seem rather to represent ideal types than actual individuals.

But when we turn to the portrait in question we have a striking exception. The whole handling is arrestingly realistic. The smouldering fire in the eye, the amazing suggestion of pent-up energy ready to burst forth like a flood, is astonishing. As we look at the portrait we realise at once that we have the presentment of one of the most remarkable men of his time. The extraordinary tales we read of him seem no longer incredible. We can believe how, disguised as an Arab, he took his life in his hand

and penetrated to the sacred shrine of Mecca itself. In its concentrated force of expression this is certainly one of the greatest of all English portraits.

To the following year, 1877, belongs a triumph in another branch of art. The sculpturesque quality had always been evident in Leighton's art, and on occasion he actually made preparatory studies for some of his figures in the round. In 1874 he produced a little wax sketch a few inches high of "An Athlete Struggling with a Python," so true to life, so vigorous in modelling and yet so grand in style that his friends urged him to carry it out on a life-size scale. The completed work in bronze was shown in the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1877, and was hailed as a masterpiece by the great French sculptor, Dalou. Sir Edgar Boehm, R.A., was equally outspoken: "It is superb," he writes. "I think it is the best statue of modern days . . . nearer to the antique than anything I have seen produced during my career in any school or country."

The statue was purchased by the Chantrey Bequest and is now in the Tate Gallery. It

was exhibited in the following year at the Paris International Exhibition, where it gained a gold medal, and in 1890 Leighton executed a replica in marble for the Glyptothek in Copenhagen.

Two other fine examples of Leighton's sculpture are to be seen in the Tate Gallery, the "Sluggard," a bronze figure of an athlete yawning and stretching himself, its languor contrasting finely with the vigour of the "Athlete and Python," and a charming little nude study of a girl and toad, entitled "Needless Alarms."

These three works alone entitle Leighton to a leading place among British sculptors.

About this time, 1877, Leighton added to his house at Holland Park the famous Arab Hall. We have already seen how the Alhambra had cast its glamour over the artist on his first visit to Spain in 1866, and his further travels in the East deepened his love of the half-barbaric splendour of Oriental art.

He was lucky, too, in his friends. Sir Richard Burton was out in Syria, Sir Caspar P. Clarke also was sent out to the East, in 1876, to pur-

chase objects for South Kensington Museum, and with the assistance of these two he was successful in obtaining a superb series of old Persian tiles. His friend, George Aitchison, R.A., the architect, designed the setting, and so in this London house is hidden away a little bit of the Far East, the pierced woodwork of the windows, the tinkle of the fountain in the centre of the marble floor, and all round the glowing splendour—the deep blues and greens and purples of the old tiles.

In 1878 Sir Frederick Grant, the President of the Royal Academy, died, and in November of that year Leighton was appointed his successor by the overwhelming majority of thirty-five votes to five, receiving shortly afterwards the usual honour of knighthood.

Congratulations poured in upon him from all sides—from his old friend and master, Steinle, from such leading contemporaries as Browning and Matthew Arnold, and what must have pleased him most, particularly hearty letters from his fellow-artists. One and all were delighted with the election.

But Leighton took the duties of his new post

very seriously. Indeed, it was a post which few men could adequately fill, and its threefold duties made heavy demands on his time. He carried them through, however, triumphantly. As a host he was unsurpassed; his wide culture, his brilliant social qualities, his never-failing tact and urbanity earned him universal praise. But in the less showy duties of the council room he was equally assiduous, and business capacity was shown to be not necessarily incompatible with high artistic gifts.

Last of all, in his Biennial Addresses to the Royal Academy students he touched a high level. His speeches at the Royal Academy banquets had proved him an orator, these showed him as a critic. Certainly, since the days of Sir Joshua, the Royal Academy had never had a President who so adequately represented British art.

But in spite of these increased responsibilities, the output of his artistic work steadily continued. He was as he said, "a workman first and an official afterwards."

The "Cimabue" of 1855, and the "Daphnephoria" of 1876, are followed by another large

decoration, the "Captive Andromache" of 1888. As a composition it stands out as the finest of all the artist's works.

In 1890 appeared perhaps the most popular of all his paintings, the well-known "Bath of Psyche," which in its combination of elegance with simplicity is unsurpassed. Bought by the Chantrey Bequest, it is now in the Tate Gallery.

No account of Lord Leighton's life would be complete without some reference to his connection with the "Artists' Rifles."

The Corps came into existence during the Continental menace of the year 1860, and Leighton shortly afterwards received the rank of ensign. During the following years he was an active member of the Corps, but when, in 1876, he was placed in command, with the rank of Lieut.-Colonel, he set himself to tackle the position with characteristic thoroughness. Discipline was slack, the level of efficiency was not high. He began by making himself absolutely master of all the technicalities of his post. He knew the drill from end to end. Then by tact, energy, and the way he shared

BATH OF PSYCHE

Tate Gallery LORD LEIGHTON

every hardship of the training, he raised a wonderful *esprit de corps.* He obtained his reward when, after an inspection, he asked the inspecting officer if he would be willing to take the battalion he had just inspected under fire. The answer was terse and to the point: "Under hell-fire, sir!"

The prestige of the battalion was maintained, and it is pleasing to note that the high level of efficiency and superior type of its members, led to its being turned, during the late war, into a Training Corps for Officers.

Leighton resigned his command in 1883, receiving then the rank of Hon. Colonel.

Honours continued to crowd upon him. In 1886 he was made a Baronet, in 1896 he was raised to the Peerage, with the title Baron Leighton of Stretton, this being the first occasion on which such an honour was conferred on a painter.

He died a few months afterwards, engaged in his art, despite failing health, almost to the last day of his life.

Leighton will always occupy a place of his own in British art. More than any one of his

contemporaries he followed the grand style, much of the feeling of Nicolas Poussin lives again in his work.

The severe methods of his early training under Steinle left an indelible trace on him. Nothing was left to chance, everything carried through to the utmost stage of completion.

Mr M. F. Spielmann, in an article in the *Magazine of Art*, gives a full description of his methods as detailed to him by the painter himself.

The following is a brief summary. The painter first lays stress on the fact that his pictures are primarily decorations: "The design is a pattern in which every line has its place and its proper relations to other lines, so that the disturbing of one of them, outside certain limits, would throw the whole out of gear."

Having conceived his picture in his mind's eye, he sets himself to make a first sketch of the whole composition, usually in black and white chalk on brown paper. This first sketch finally completed, the stage of improvisation is over, and from this first beginning the work is carried to completion with scientific exactitude,

and almost without alteration. Next, the model is called in and separate nude studies made of each figure: then all are combined in a second study of the whole composition, figures and background, which is carefully squared off for enlargement to the full size. At this stage a sketch of the colour scheme is made in oils.

Then the full-sized canvas is produced, the design accurately transferred, "never departing a hair's-breadth from the outlines and forms already obtained," and each figure painted in the nude from life, in a warm monochrome with the closest possible finish. After a series of careful individual studies on brown paper the figures are draped, being painted in the same monochrome as the nude study underneath. The background and accessories are also added in monochrome. The whole picture is now practically complete in monochrome, like a print or photograph. To this foundation, with the oil sketch as a guide, the colour is then finally added.

Such methods with their scientific precision were bound to carry with them certain drawbacks. Watts remarked: "How much finer

Leighton's work would be if he would only admit the accidental." And so it remains always a little cold and aloof. Form and pattern are all-important, colour comes in as an afterthought ; the variations of textile, the momentary and changing effects of light are more or less ignored. More vital still, the work always seems remote from daily human life. We exchange a more serene atmosphere for that of this workaday world, but we miss the warm breath of human feeling.

CHAPTER TEN

JAMES M'NEILL WHISTLER

CHAPTER TEN
JAMES M'NEILL WHISTLER

A FEW YEARS AGO IT WOULD HAVE seemed strange that James M'Neill Whistler should be included in the list of our favourite modern painters. Certainly in his work he embodies the antithesis of the outlook of the P.R.B.'s: he represents the swing of the pendulum in the opposite direction. Debonair, outlandish, arresting, frivolous in manner, however serious in intention, in his person, too, he is the antithesis of Victorian respectability.

But Victorian respectability has had its day, and is becoming as remote to us as the daintier but still more formal code of the days of Jane Austen.

And so Whistler has become one of the old masters, and though as yet he is little represented in our National Collections, yet three of his works at least are known to all: his portrait of Carlyle, his portrait of his own mother, and his "Battersea Bridge."

But Whistler has one special claim on our affection. Just as Canaletto's name is inseparably linked with the canals and lagoons

of Venice, so is Whistler's with the Thames. In his work—paintings, etchings and lithographs—he gives us the romance of the great river, and in his nocturnes he reveals it to us under a new phase of beauty.

And in spite of his artificialities and his affectations he was a historic figure. Just as the P.R.B.'s did a generation before, he raised the banner of revolt and fought his battle with the Philistines. Strangely enough Ruskin, the champion of the earlier rebels, was now among the chief of the supporters of authority. And while the P.R.B.'s had at least the comfort of mutual support in their misfortunes, Whistler fought his battle single-handed. It was a hard struggle, and he suffered severely financially, but he fought undauntedly, and with infinite gaiety and wit. Some of his gibes have become historic. His repartees were swift as lightning and he had a knack of packing a volume into a phrase. He told Rossetti he "ought to frame his sonnets." What a criticism was there!

But sometimes we wish he had been less of a controversialist. His brilliant play with

BATTERSEA BRIDGE

Tate Gallery WHISTLER

the foils detracts attention too much from his serious work with the brush. But after all even a worm will turn, and to step on Whistler was like treading on a rattlesnake.

Still, under the cynical mask if we search, we shall find a man of strong affections, of infinite courtesy, and a great and serious artist.

James Abbott M'Neill Whistler was born in Lowell, Mass., on 10th July 1834. His father was an artillery officer in the army, but in those days in America such trained men found considerable employment as civil engineers, and in 1842 he received an important post in Russia, carrying out the building of the railway from St Petersburg to Moscow. The story is told that when the question of the route to be followed was being discussed the Tsar took a ruler and drawing a line from the one city to the other said: "There is the route."

Whistler's early years from 1843 until his father's death in 1849 were passed in Russia. His mother then returned with her two sons to the United States, where, in 1851, following in his father's footsteps he entered West Point Military Academy. Here he remained until

1854, apparently proficient in nothing but drawing, though the traditions of West Point —particularly the principle of "taking nothing lying down"—remained with him through life.

He next entered the Coast Survey, through the influence of an old friend of his father's, and remained there for about a year. Here he learned the technique of etching, and as the maps of the Coast Survey had to be clean and sharp in drawing, and absolutely accurate, the training was of the utmost value.

In 1855 at the age of twenty-one he took up the study of art seriously, and with an allowance from his family of $350 a year, set off for Paris. Here he remained for about four years.

Among his associates were Du Maurier, Poynter, Val Prinsep, Legros, Fantin-Latour and others who have now become famous. Du Maurier has made some of them live in the pages of *Trilby*. Whistler seemed much more at home with the French than with the English students. The latter could not understand his volatile ways. Sir Edward Poynter, speaking at a Royal Academy Banquet in 1904, said he "knew Whistler well when he was a

student in Paris—that is if he could be called a student, who to my knowledge during the two or three years I was associated with him devoted hardly as many weeks to study." Perhaps the English artist's mistake was in assuming that "study" is only conducted within the walls of an art school. Whistler was studying the life round about him, which was a vital thing, because he was taking part in it. He knew all these people, artists, models, and all. And whatever his neglect of formal training he was able to make himself a fine draughtsman, a competent painter, and a master of etching.

In 1857 with a French companion, Ernest Delannoy, he set off on a holiday in Alsace. They had 250 francs to start with, but the money ran out when they were at Cologne. After writing for remittances to all possible sources and waiting for a fortnight without result, they were forced to leave Whistler's precious copper plates, with his unfinished etchings upon them, behind as security, while they tramped their way home, paying their way by their sketches—not a meal without a portrait.

The work done on this trip furnished most

of the subjects for the "Little French Set" of etchings published in 1858.

By this time, too, he had begun to paint, and his painting "La Mère Gerard," the old seller of flowers and matches at the Gate of the Luxembourg, was painted at this time, as also the "Old Man Smoking," now in the Luxembourg Gallery.

In 1859 he came to London, staying with his step-sister, who had married the surgeon and etcher, Seymour Haden. Here he painted his first outstanding work, the study of Mrs Haden and her daughter Annie, known as "At the Piano." Rejected at the Salon in 1859, it was hung in the Academy of the following year.

In this picture we see many of the qualities which were afterwards to distinguish the work of the painter—the careful balance of form against form, the seated lady at the piano, the standing child opposite, the sensitive use of the rectangular shapes of the pictures on the wall—in these things we see foreshadowed the composition of the later portraits of his mother, Carlyle, and Miss Alexander. The colouring,

however, of the early work is quite different from that of his later style, being heavy and dark in tone, though of a rich luminous quality. The picture bears no signs of immaturity, but is strongly handled and vigorous, and stands out as an absolutely personal piece of work. The critics had little to say in its favour, one paper characterising it as "an eccentric, uncouth, smudgy, phantom-like picture of a lady at a pianoforte, with a ghastly-looking child in a white frock looking on," but Thackeray, who saw it, was delighted with "Annie Haden standing by the Piano."

It found a purchaser in John Philip, R.A., then just returned from Spain, at the small price of £30. The picture is now in the collection of Mr Edmund Davis, who paid for it the sum of £2800.

Whistler now settles in London, which remains his home until his death. The next important event in his artistic life is the publication of his Thames set of etchings, a series of sixteen plates. Here we find some of his most characteristic work: "The Pool of London," "Black Lion Wharf," "Thames Police," to

name but a few. Just as he did later in his nocturnes, Whistler revealed here a new aspect of beauty in these studies of wharves and shipping and the other accompaniments of a busy port.

It is interesting to note that he gets useful help in putting them on the market from the same Serjeant Thomas who befriended Millais in his young days. Thomas had opened a shop in Bond Street for the sale of etchings, engravings and other works of art, under the management of his son, Edmund Thomas. He undertook the sale of Whistler's Thames etchings, and kept a press in the establishment at which most of the printing was done. He also had the French printer Delâtre, who had printed Whistler's French Set, brought over to superintend the printing, saying that only two people, Delâtre and Whistler himself, succeeded in doing the plates justice. The shop was closed, however, after a time, Edmund Thomas following in his father's footsteps by devoting himself to the Law.

In addition to the series of Thames etchings we have also a number of paintings of similar subjects. One of the first of these was "Wapp-

ing," painted about 1860, though not exhibited till 1864; "The Thames in Ice" (about 1860); and "The Demolition of Old Westminster Bridge" (1862); strongly-handled, realistic studies, painted with rich fatty pigment. The influence of Courbet, the French master under whom he had worked for a time in Paris, is evident in these earlier works, and is still more clearly seen in the "Blue Wave," Biarritz (1861), painted during a short visit to the South of France. His intention had been to go on to Madrid, chiefly with the object of studying the works of the great Spanish master, Velazquez, in the Prado Gallery there, but he never got further than Fuenterrabia on the frontier, and the journey was postponed, and though often afterwards talked of, never was carried out.

The Civil War had now broken out in America. His elder brother, William, was a surgeon in the Confederate army, and his mother had left America and come to England. In 1863 he took a house in Lindsey Row, now Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, where she joined him. Her features are familiar to all from the famous portrait painted about ten years later.

In his attitude to his mother we get a glimpse of the side of Whistler which he was most careful to hide from the public. There is a very tender bond between him and the sweet dignified little lady, with her almost Quaker-like austerity. Every Sunday he escorts her to Chelsea Church and he watches over her with the most anxious solicitude.

And now a new influence creeps into Whistler's work, the influence of Japan. Within the last fifty years the art of the Far East has exercised a continually increasing influence on the art of the West. Fifty years ago Japan was still practically a closed book to the European, its ports had not yet been thrown open to commerce. But things were rapidly to change. Now Japan has adopted almost too whole-heartedly European civilisation, and is one of the great progressive countries of the world. Thanks, too, to the magnificent series of coloured reproductions published in the *Kokka* by the Japanese Government, and in other private publications in Japan, we are now familiar with the masterpieces of Chinese and Japanese painting and sculpture.

In the British Museum also, in the Musée Guimet in Paris, the Metropolitan Museum, New York, and Boston Public Library, fine collections of the originals may be studied.

But fifty years ago only the beginnings of Japanese art in block books and colour prints were finding their way into Europe.

The distinctive features which mark off Japanese pictorial art from that of the West may be summed up in a few words.

Since the days of the Renaissance in Italy, European painting has sought to rival sculpture in producing the complete illusion of reality—it aims at giving modelling, roundness and solidity of form. It is an art of three dimensions. Japanese art has remained practically an art of two dimensions. Form is expressed by line; colour is used flatly and decoratively. Cast shadows are left out, and no attempt is made to express modelling or relief. Also the Japanese instinct is to avoid actual realism, to suggest the spirit rather than the form; the flight of a bird rather than its plumage. And in the Japanese style of composition there is an avoidance of actual symmetry, a wayward

grace—balance being obtained by a dexterous placing of the main objects. It is an art of subtlety and charm, rather than of strength.

It was in Paris that Whistler had his introduction to Japanese art. It is said that Delâtre, the printer, discovered a book of Hokusai's drawings, used as a packing for china, which was eagerly studied by Whistler and others of his circle. Anyhow, Whistler begins to collect Japanese prints, lacquer, blue and white china, wherever he can find them.

He was not alone in this, as his neighbour Rossetti had similar tastes, and there was a good deal of friendly rivalry between the two collectors.

And so in Whistler's work we see a new audacity in spacing, a greater delicacy in the use of colour. His work becomes more selective, much less realistic. He begins to design his pictures as harmonies in line or colour, based on a given theme.

The new note was definitely struck in his "Symphony in White," painted in France in 1861-2. The picture was rejected at the Royal Academy Exhibition in 1862, but shown at a

Gallery opened in Berners Street. On being sent the next year to the Salon it was rejected there, along with a number of works by the younger men, but was shown at the *Salon des Refusés*, opened in the same building by order of Napoleon III. The public treated the Exhibition as a huge joke, and Whistler's picture had the honour of being regarded as one of the titbits. But he steadily set himself to work out the new vein.

Sometimes Japanese costumes were employed, as in the "Lange Leizen," and the "Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine," both painted in 1864; but there was no attempt to create the illusion of an Eastern setting. They were frankly fantasias in the Japanese style.

In the same year, 1864, he gives us "Symphony in White, No. 2," sometimes known as the "Little White Girl."

It is painted from his favourite model at this time, Jo, who stands in a plain white muslin dress, her rich blonde hair falling down her back, leaning her arm on a white marble mantelpiece, on which stands a red lacquer pot and a blue and white Chinese vase. The face

is reflected in a mirror above the mantelpiece; and bright notes of colour are introduced at the bottom of the picture in the Japanese fan and the group of purple-pink azaleas. It is a study in different tones of white, with the richer notes of colour giving a contrast.

The critics and the public were frankly mystified. Mr P. G. Hamerton, writing of the "Symphony in White, No. 3," exhibited in 1867, objects that it is "not precisely a symphony in white. There is yellowish dress and brown hair, and blue ribbon, and red fan, flowers, green leaves, etc."

Whistler's reply is crushing: "Bon Dieu! did this person expect white hair and chalked faces? And does he, then, in his astounding consequence, believe that a Symphony in F contains no other note, but shall be a continuous repetition of F F F . . . ? Fool!"

An amusing incident is told about the "Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine." A would-be purchaser objected to the signature on the picture, which he thought too conspicuous. Whistler indignantly refused to alter it, but evidently he began to think. The signatures

and seals on Japanese prints were things of beauty and played an essential part in the composition; and so the butterfly, a sort of decorative letter W, shortly after this time makes its appearance as his signature.

I remember being told by a friend how he found an old gentleman standing before the Carlyle portrait, peering into it carefully, and examining the surface inch by inch. At last he turned round: "Excuse me, sir, but could you oblige me by telling me where the signature on this picture is?" "Why, yes," said my friend, pointing to the large butterfly. "What! that a signature?" and he marched off in great disgust!

In 1866 Whistler went to Valparaiso on some hare-brained adventure connected with the war between Chili and Spain; but he was back none the worse before the end of the year, the richer by a series of beautiful marine paintings of Valparaiso Harbour, which give us the first hint of the new phase revealed in his Thames "Nocturnes."

But the following years bring some of his most important works, a great series of por-

traits. The first of these is the well-known portrait of his mother, dated 1872. It was entitled by Whistler "An Arrangement in Grey and Black," and it is so: the silhouette of the sweet-faced old lady, dressed in black, with a white cap and kerchief, posed against a grey background. Opposite her a black curtain with embroidered pattern falls in straight folds almost to the floor; two framed prints are on the wall. It is a design on the lines of the early piano picture, but simpler and grander. And in place of the rich glowing browns of the early work we have tender greys and luminous blacks and clear, cool flesh tints.

That is the decorative aspect, but in spite of what Whistler says, the matter does not end there. One can quite understand that he hardly liked the rest to be discussed, for the relations between mother and son were very tender. Suffice it to say that critics and public unite in seeing in the picture one of the most beautiful and sympathetic renderings in existence of serene and contented old age.

Quite different is the "Carlyle," now in the Corporation Gallery, Glasgow. Here, again, we

have an arrangement in grey and black; here, again, we have a presentment of old age. But not a picture of contented old age. The old man sits huddled up on a chair, weary and tired, but with something of smouldering fire in his aspect, like a sick lion.

The third, Miss Alexander, is a picture of youth. A little girl, in short, white muslin frock, white stockings and black shoes, a grey hat with a black bow in her hand, stands against a grey wall with black dado. Two or three butterflies flutter around. Again it is a harmony in black and white and grey, but in this case the white predominates. In dignity of poise it is like Velazquez; in sensitiveness of placing, in the suggestion of life, it is Japanese, but the extraordinary thing about the picture is the way it suggests the delicacy and daintiness of youth, as fresh and fragrant and fragile as a flower.

Had Whistler painted nothing but these three portraits he would still have taken rank among the great painters of the nineteenth century. All three were shown at an Exhibition of his works, held at 48 Pall Mall, in

1874. Here Whistler once more introduced the public to something new. His pictures were not merely exposed for sale in rows upon the wall. They were comparatively few and were spaced, with great skill, on well-chosen backgrounds. Bronzes, blue and white china, flowers, completed the decoration of the room. The Exhibition itself was a work of art. Artistic people at once saw how restful and pleasant a room treated in this way could be, and Whistler began to be asked to suggest colour schemes for the decoration of rooms, and it is he who inaugurated the quiet schemes—backgrounds of neutral tones with white paint, which have now almost superseded the restless Morris wall-papers.

But those quiet schemes were designed by Whistler to form a background to works of art. In 1876 we find him carrying out a scheme of decoration which is a work of art in itself—the famous Peacock Room for Mr F. R. Leyland's house in Princes Gate. Leyland owned the "Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine," which hung over the mantelpiece of the dining-room —the walls covered with old Spanish leather.

LITTLE WHITE GIRL.

National Gallery WHISTLER

Whistler decorated the whole wall surface in a scheme of blue and gold, with two gorgeous peacocks on the wall opposite the picture. Whistler objected to subject in his pictures, but in this decoration he resorted to symbolism. He called them the rich peacock and the poor peacock—the patron and the artist: the first clutching a pile of gold, and with gold and feathers flying all around; the other with wings and tail spread in defiance. As the work progressed its fame spread abroad, and fashionable London flocked to see it. Leyland had been away from Princes Gate for months, and Whistler held receptions to which he issued the invitations as if he were in his own studio.

Leyland returned home furious. The original commission had been for £500, but under Whistler's hands the scheme had grown and grown. He now asked for 2000 guineas. Leyland, who had never really authorised the work as finally carried out, offered £1000. The result was a violent quarrel, but as Whistler said: "Leyland will sit there at dinner, his back to the 'Princesse,' and always before him the apotheosis of *l'art et l'argent*."

The room some years ago was removed, and finally purchased by Mr Charles L. Freer of Detroit, who also owned the "Princesse," so that now in all probability it stands just as Whistler painted it.

But living in Chelsea, Whistler had gone back to his early love, the river. Not far from his house lived a boatman, named Greaves, who, years before, used to row Turner on the river. Now his two sons take out Whistler. He teaches the boys to paint, they teach him "the waterman's jerk," and sometimes they spend the whole night on the river. And so the "Nocturnes" come into being. Evening and night scenes, full of atmosphere and mystery—the vague forms of the shore, the gleaming lights, subtle, quiet, elusive and full of peace.

The idea was borrowed from the colour prints of the Japanese artist, Hiroshige, evening effects on the Sumida River, the outline of a bridge seen against the sky, the gleam of the pale paper lanterns. But the treatment was Whistler's own—the paint applied in delicate films, the colour infinitely tender but full of a curious luminosity. The musical term, "Noc-

turne," applied to them, suggests what the artist had in his mind. Not the actual fact, but the poetry of night, was what he wished to suggest.

When Sir Coutts Lindsay opened the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877, Whistler exhibited eight pictures there, including the "Carlyle" and several "Nocturnes." They were received with an outburst of derision in the press almost paralleling that which greeted the works of the Pre-Raphaelites in 1850.

And the onslaught reached its culmination in an article published by Ruskin in *Fors Clavigera* on 2nd July 1877. Referring to the Nocturne—"The Falling Rocket": "I have seen and heard much of Cockney impudence before now," he wrote, "but never expected to hear a coxcomb ask 200 guineas for throwing a pot of paint in the public's face."

The sequel was the libel action brought by Whistler against Ruskin, and heard on 25th and 26th November 1878. The artist won his case with the nominal damages of one farthing, but as he had to pay his own costs, it resulted in a severe financial loss to him.

Whistler publishes the report of the trial in

his *Gentle Art of Making Enemies*, adding little marginal notes, signed with a butterfly with a sting in its tail.

But in spite of Whistler's sparkling wit, the trial makes rather sad reading. British official art shows up very badly. Ruskin pleads illness, and does not appear. Whistler holds letters from Leighton and other prominent figures in the world of art, testifying to his artistic abilities, but is asked by these persons not to use them. Two men make a manly stand. W. M. Rossetti, though in the awkward position of being a friend of both parties, particularly of Ruskin, gave his evidence without bias. "He admired Mr Whistler's pictures, but not without exception. He appreciated the meaning of the titles. The 'Nocturne in Black and Gold' was not one of those he admired, but he considered it a work of art, and worth 200 guineas."

Albert Moore was more whole-hearted. "The pictures were beautiful works which no other painter could have produced." "The 'Nocturne in Black and Gold' he looked on as simply marvellous, the most consummate art."

In answer to a question: "No, he would not call it eccentricity, he should call it originality."

I think posterity endorses the opinion of Albert Moore.

Burne-Jones when called cut rather a poor figure. With the best intentions in the world he could not condemn the picture entirely—it had fine colour and atmosphere—"I must speak the truth," he added pathetically—but it had no form or composition, it was only one of the thousand failures to paint night.

The most interesting part, of course, was Whistler's own examination.

The Attorney-General, Mr Bowen, asked him: "How long did it take you to knock off that Nocturne, Mr Whistler?"

Whistler: "I beg your pardon?"

The Attorney-General explained his phrase, saying it was a term he applied to his own work.

Whistler: "Let us say then how long did I take to knock off—I think that is it—to knock off that Nocturne. About a day. A few touches next day. I had better say two days."

Attorney-General: "And do you charge

200 guineas, Mr Whistler, for the work of two days?"

Whistler: "No; I ask it for the knowledge of a lifetime."

The Judge's summing-up reads now as very unfair to the artist. He began by pointing out to the jury that Ruskin's words undoubtedly constituted a libel, but he suggested to the jury that the question for them to decide was whether "contemptuous damages to the extent say of one farthing, indicating that the matter should never have been brought to Court, would meet the case, or whether some small sum should be awarded as indicating that the offender had gone beyond the strict letter of the law."

The jury followed the lead given them, and awarded the "contemptuous damages" of one farthing, the judge ruling that each side must pay its own costs.

A subscription was opened to pay Ruskin's, but Whistler was left to pay his own. He suffered severely from the difficulty in selling his pictures. No one would buy after the ridicule heaped on them during the trial, and the

final result was his bankruptcy in the next year 1879.

It is interesting to note that one of the despised Nocturnes—"Battersea Bridge—Nocturne in Blue and Silver," appeared some time after at Christie's. It was greeted with hisses and was knocked down for £60. But after the Whistler Memorial Exhibition of 1905, it was bought by the National Art Collections Fund and presented to the nation. It now hangs in the Tate Gallery, in the original frame designed and decorated by Whistler.

It was at this juncture when funds seemed absolutely unattainable, that Howell, who had served Rossetti so well as a business manager, came along and routed out the plates of Whistler's old etchings, and they set to work to print them. Soon cheques began to come in and the situation was saved. But the handling of the plates and the printing had aroused Whistler's old enthusiasm for the medium, and he succeeded in obtaining a commission from the Fine Art Society for a series of Venetian etchings, and late in September 1879 set out for Venice.

The Venetian etchings include some of his finest works. He also executed while there a series of pastel studies on brown paper of gem-like brilliancy of colour. The first set of Venetian etchings was published in 1880, a second in 1886.

Lithography, hitherto a process neglected by artists, was brought to his notice by the lithographer, T. R. Way, and in this medium he executed a series of remarkable works, giving a new impetus to artistic lithography.

In the ten years from 1880 to 1890 Whistler gradually conquers the town. He holds his Exhibitions at the Fine Art Society, with their fantastic accompaniments—the presentation of little golden butterflies on the private View Day, and so on. He becomes more and more the foppish figure that attracts all eyes. His wit flashes and sparkles in the daily press.

And the masterpieces keep quietly growing, such portraits as the "Sarasate," the "Yellow Buskin," "The Lady Meux," and dainty etchings, lithographs and water-colours.

In 1885 he gave his famous lecture "Ten o'Clock." The title only signifies that that was

the hour at which the lecture was delivered, ten in the evening, after people had had time to dine comfortably.

The lecture itself is eminently characteristic and valuable in so far as it gives you the key to the artist's works. Whimsical in style, it is written in beautiful English, rising at times, as in the passage describing evening on the river, into language of great beauty.

It runs sharply counter to the spirit of the times. Art is not a teacher seeking to elevate, art is not to be confounded with education.

"She is a goddess . . . selfishly occupied with her own perfection only . . . having no desire to learn . . . seeking and finding the beautiful in all conditions and in all times."

It is a fallacy to think that once on a time art was universally esteemed, in the age of Pericles at Athens, or in Florence of the fifteenth century.

"Listen. There never was an artistic period. There never was an art-loving nation." . . . "Art simply happens," and it may come at any time, with the rough, homely Dutchman,

Rembrandt, among the Jews of Amsterdam, or with the courtly Velazquez amidst the artificiality of the Court of Spain.

Another fallacy is the fetish of truth to Nature.

The artist must select. "He does not confine himself to purposeless copying without thought each blade of grass . . . but in the long curve of the narrow leaf corrected by the straight tall stem, he learns how grace is wedded to dignity."

Nature is the keyboard spread before the artist. It is the artist himself who selects the notes, and makes the melody. To say the artist should portray Nature as she is, is to tell the musician to sit on the piano.

Nature herself is seldom right. In the glare of daylight Nature's forms are harsh and insistent; the detail worries the eye; it is blatant and vulgar.

But "when the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry as with a veil, the poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky and the tall chimneys become campanili and the warehouses palaces in the night heavens, and

fairyland is before us, Nature is for once in tune."

People came to scoff, but remained to think. They found they were listening to a serious pronouncement by a great artist on his art. It was a confession of faith, and if we read and apply it we shall find in it the key to Whistler's work.

In 1884 Whistler became a member of the Society of British Artists and in 1886 its President. He threw himself into the work with enthusiasm. The Society was a mere appendage to the Academy; he made it independent. At the Jubilee of 1887 he obtained for it a Royal Charter, and it became the Royal Society of British Artists. He raised the tone of the Exhibitions; bad work was ruthlessly thrown out.

But, alas! the Annual Exhibition was the "shop" at which members were accustomed to sell their work. Sales went down steadily, though the standard of the Exhibitions rose. A strong opposition grew in the Society, and in 1888 Whistler resigned.

In his words: "The artists seceded with him; the British remained."

In 1890 the numerous little brown-paper pamphlets which he had issued from time to time, along with the account of the Ruskin action, and a number of his letters to the Press were brought together in the *Gentle Art of Making Enemies, as pleasantly exemplified in the many instances wherein the serious ones of this earth, carefully exasperated, have been prettily spurred on to unseemliness and indiscretion, while overcome by an undue sense of right.*

Here we have Whistler the butterfly, Whistler the wasp, the Whistler who was such a thorn in the side of officialdom, and at which the great British public was always ready to laugh. But now and then there is a revelation of another Whistler.

On 1st May 1889, to celebrate an honour bestowed upon him by the Royal Academy of Munich, a dinner was given to him at the Criterion, attended by many of his friends and including two Royal Academicians, W. Q. Orchardson and Alfred Gilbert. Here for a moment he set aside his mask. Replying to the toast of his health he said :

"In surroundings of antagonism I may have

wrapped myself in a species of misunderstanding as that other traveller drew closer about him the folds of his cloak the more bitterly the winds and the storm assailed him on his way. But as with him, when the sun shone upon him in his path, his cloak fell from his shoulders, so I, in the warm glow of your friendship, throw from me all former disguise, and making no further attempt to hide my true feeling, disclose to you my deep emotion at such unwonted testimony of affection and faith."

After all, what Whistler wanted was to combine two things: he was the true artist following his star wherever it led, with a contempt for the ordinary, the commonplace, the commercial. And yet he would have liked to be the figurehead, the leader, pointing the way, controlling the destinies of Official Art. The two were incompatible; he found this in his short tenancy of office as President of the R.B.A.

But he lived long enough to see the old controversies a thing of the past and to enjoy a position unique among living artists. On

the foundation of the International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers, a cosmopolitan body including in its membership the chief figures in European art, he was made its first President, a position he occupied until his death in 1903.

A FEW SCOTTISH PAINTERS

IT MAY NOT BE INAPPROPRIATE TO conclude this little volume with a short reference to a number of painters working in the North, more or less independently from their English contemporaries, but influenced by the same broad general principles.

It is particularly interesting to note that the outlook of the P.R.B. is anticipated in the work of several Scots painters of earlier date. Of these, three may be singled out for special mention: David Scott, Wm. Dyce, and Sir Joseph Noel Paton.

Scottish painting had its first glorious period in the beginning of the nineteenth century with the appearance of Raeburn and Wilkie, and art there, as in England, had settled down into an uninteresting jog-trot, portraiture and genre being the two main themes.

David Scott comes in the midst of this dullness with a vigorous and personal note. Born in 1806, he was the son of an engraver, and the numbers of engravings and illustrated books of all kinds, brought together by his father, surrounded him early with pictorial art, but otherwise his early home-life appears to have

been pervaded by an atmosphere of religious gloom.

Variations on the theme of death form his first efforts both in pictorial and literary form.

Both David Scott and his younger brother, Wm. Bell Scott, spent some years at their father's profession of engraving and etching, but David gradually devotes himself to more purely pictorial work. In 1828 he exhibits his first picture, "The Hopes of Early Genius Dispelled by Death." It is followed by "Nimrod," "Cain," "Wallace Defending Scotland," "Sarpedon Carried by Death and Sleep," and this choice of heroic and abstract themes characterises his work throughout life.

Notice should also be made of his series of powerful etchings illustrating Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner."

In 1832 he went to Italy, where he remained for over a year, and when he returned his work had taken on something of the splendour of the Venetian School.

The "Vintager" in the National Gallery of Scotland, in addition to noble design, gives us rich full colouring and a fine decorative quality.

He became a member of the Royal Scottish Academy, but found himself little in sympathy with the aims of that official institution. Throughout his life he remains a figure apart —something of a Scottish William Blake, and he dies after a curious, half-thwarted life, in which he never completely seems to find self-expression, at the comparatively early age of forty-three. He is well represented in the National Gallery of Scotland, two of his finest works there being "The Traitor's Gate," and "Puck Fleeing before the Dawn."

The first deals with a historical subject, the closing episode in the life of the Duke of Gloucester, brother of Richard II., a historical subject of a similar type to those of Ford Madox Brown, but it is treated with a grandeur of style, and rises to a height of tragic emotion far beyond the scope of the southern master.

In the second, Scott escapes for once from his gloomy imaginings into the realms of pure fantasy. The magic of Shakespeare's fairy poetry has never had finer pictorial expression.

William Dyce (1806-64) is quite a different figure. The son of an Aberdeen doctor, he

took up art as his profession, and by the time he was twenty-six had already paid three visits to Italy. Here in addition to studying the old masters, he came in contact with the German Nazarenes, Overbeck and Carnelius, with whom he had much in common. In Edinburgh he was associated with the Trustees Academy, and was asked by the Government to make an inquiry into the management of such schools abroad. His report was used in the modelling of the Government school at Somerset House, which was the nucleus of the larger scheme later carried out at South Kensington.

Dyce was afterwards employed in various large decorative schemes in London, at Westminster and elsewhere, became a member of the Royal Academy and one of the heads of official art in the metropolis.

When the Pre-Raphaelites appeared, they had his sympathy and support, and Holman Hunt especially was indebted to him for more practical help as well.

At the Tate Gallery are a number of his works, the finest being "St John Leading the Virgin Mary from the Tomb." It shows much

of the feeling and characteristic handling of the P.R.B.'s, though begun in 1844, and in addition is marked by sincere devotional feeling.

In the National Gallery is the beautiful landscape of "Pegwell Bay," painted in 1858, combining extreme minuteness of detail with exquisite atmospheric truth.

Sir Joseph Noel Paton (1821-1901) occupied in Scotland a place rather similar to that taken by Holman Hunt in England. His engravings illustrating the old ballad, "The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow," still form the decorations of many a Scottish middle-class home, and his religious pictures, like Holman Hunt's, toured the country, and were used by the preachers as a pictorial text.

He was born at Dunfermline, where his father was a designer for the linen trade, and also in his leisure hours an antiquary and a great collector of engravings, armour and other articles of virtu. He studied for a short time in 1843 at the Royal Academy Schools, where he met the youthful Millais, and in 1845 and 1847 was successful in obtaining a prize at the Westminster Hall competitions.

He painted with the same minuteness of detail as the Pre-Raphaelites, but it is interesting to note that his two most popular paintings, the "Quarrel of Oberon and Titania" and their "Reconciliation," both in the National Gallery of Scotland, were painted in 1846 and 1847, before the foundation of the Brotherhood took place.

He became a member of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1850, and in 1866 was made Her Majesty's Limner for Scotland and had the honour of knighthood conferred upon him.

Belonging to a later generation is Sir William Quiller Orchardson (1835-1910), a Scottish artist who, like Wilkie, and so many others of his countrymen, settled in London. He obtained the highest official recognition in his profession, being made an R.A. in 1877, and receiving a knighthood in 1907.

Orchardson has a place of his own in British art. The eighteenth century of Reynolds and Gainsborough is the period from which he loves to draw his subjects, but in his hands it is lifted into the realms of romance. While Watteau loved the glades of St Cloud, Or-

chardson loves the stately interiors of the Georgian houses as his backgrounds. A classic spirit rare in British art pervades his graceful and dignified compositions.

A beautiful and typical example is "Her First Dance," in the Tate Gallery, while the large canvas in the same collection, "Napoleon on Board the *Bellerophon*," is one of the best known British historical paintings. A more personal and homely note is struck in the "Master Baby" of the Scottish National Gallery, a picture which in its rich harmony of brown and gold recalls Whistler's early picture "At the Piano."

In Edinburgh, especially, a group of artists of wide popularity draw their subjects from the picturesque fishing villages surrounding the shores of the Firth of Forth. A style of genre painting arises somewhat akin to that practised by Josef Israels in Holland, and marine subjects from the fishing ports show also a strong affinity to the work of the modern Dutch school. Of the first class a typical example is to be seen in the "Caller Herrin'" of Alexander Roche, R.S.A., while James

Paterson, R. W. Allan and many others give us many characteristic studies of the Scottish fishing fleets, and J. Thorburn Ross in such a work as "The Bass Rock" lifts us above the commonplace, and surrounds the rocky crag with a romantic glamour.